

BOOK REVIEWS

The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration. By Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, xvi + 366 pp., \$79.00.

For more than four decades, Bruce Metzger's *Text of the New Testament* has been the standard introduction to NT textual criticism for the English-speaking world. The fourth edition of this venerable classic has undergone a more thorough revision than any previous iteration, in part because it is now co-authored by Bart Ehrman. The preface states, "Room for the addition of important bibliographical items, along with expanded information on the making and copying of books in antiquity and on the history of the transmission of the text of the New Testament, has been gained by the elimination of materials that seemed to be of peripheral interest to present-day readers" (p. xiii). One might think that a great deal has been sacrificed. Yet even though the hard-bound edition is slimmer than the paperback third edition, it has 64 more pages. Unfortunately, the preface does not specify *exactly* what has been dropped and what has been added. Only a comparison of this new text with the third edition reveals the differences. Much more material has been added than dropped.

The *Text of the New Testament* has three main sections: The Materials for the Textual Criticism of the New Testament (pp. 1–134); The History of New Testament Textual Criticism as Reflected in Printed Editions of the Greek Testament (pp. 135–94); and The Application of Textual Criticism to the Text of the New Testament (pp. 195–343). The greatest changes from the previous edition are found in the third part. Among these are the following additions. In Chapter 6.4, Eclecticism has been subsumed under Alternative Methods of Textual Criticism, which now includes a discussion of the majority text theory. In Chapter 6.6, Methods of Determining Family Relationships among Manuscripts now includes a treatment of quantitative analysis, the Claremont Profile Method, the Alands' use of *Teststellen*, and the Comprehensive Profile Method. Chapter 6.7, The Use of Computers in New Testament Textual Criticism; Chapter 6.8, Significant Ongoing Projects (including the work of the *Institut für neutestamentliche Textforschung* and the International Greek New Testament Project); and Chapter 8, History of the Transmission of the Text of the New Testament, are new. In this last chapter, section 4 (The Use of Textual Data for the Social History of Early Christianity) is most likely Ehrman's distinct contribution.

Though smaller in scope, other helpful additions include part 1, chapter 1 (expanded material on papyrus, parchment, ink making); three more Greek manuscripts (P⁴⁺⁶⁴⁺⁶⁷; P¹¹⁵; codex 1582) are added to part 1, chapter 2: Important Witnesses to the Text of the New Testament.

Two other major changes are found in the fourth edition. First, a welcome and long-overdue characteristic is the incorporation into the body of the book of the Additional Notes for the Second Edition (which comprised thirteen pages in the third edition). Gone (or, rather, subsumed under the new and revised sections mentioned above) is the Appendix: Advances in Textual Criticism of the New Testament 1964–1990. Having in one location the history of recent advances, a very helpful feature, is no longer a part of the new edition.

Only a little material has been removed because such was deemed to be “of peripheral interest to present-day readers” (p. xiii). The lacunose sections are Part 3, Chapter 6.3: Statistical Methods of Textual Criticism; and Part 3, Chapter 6.4: Local Texts and Ancient Editions now discusses only B. H. Streeter’s contribution, dropping Giorgio Pasquali’s.

An important alteration in nomenclature occurs with “majuscule” replacing “uncial” (Part 1, Chapter 2.1.2: Important Greek Majuscule Manuscripts of the New Testament; p. 62). No note is given at the beginning of this section, but earlier in the book a footnote (p. 17, n. 22) explains that the term “uncial” is no longer appropriate for Greek manuscripts. It applies to Latin manuscripts, but not Greek. The capital letter manuscripts are now to be called majuscules. This change in terminology goes back to a suggestion by W. H. P. Hatch in 1935, but the tradition for calling Greek manuscripts uncials has proven difficult to uproot, having been kept alive for three editions of *The Text of the New Testament*.

Of the above changes, the most significant is Part 3, Chapter 8.4: The Use of Textual Data for the Social History of Early Christianity. Ehrman’s fingerprints are clearly detected here. The section is introduced by the admission that although “the ultimate goal of textual criticism is to reconstruct the original text of the New Testament” (p. 280), other secondary objectives should not be ignored. Among these is the recognition that “the history of a text’s transmission can contribute to the history of its interpretation” (p. 281). It is noteworthy that *The Text of the New Testament* recognizes this as a *secondary* goal rather than the primary one. Nevertheless, this secondary goal is important in its own right and should be an objective of those working in this discipline.

As anyone who has worked in the field of NT textual criticism recognizes, Metzger’s *Text of the New Testament* is virtually in a league by itself. The judicious and even-handed approach, depth of research, careful documentation, engaging style, and comprehensive coverage set it apart as the standard handbook for the discipline. Here both beginners and seasoned scholars can learn much. I found myself repeatedly referring to various sections, always learning more nuances, bibliographical tidbits, and clarifications on the great mass of data that is the sacred treasure of NT textual criticism.

Nevertheless, there are weaknesses in this tome. Some of these are lingering deficiencies from previous editions, while others are new shortcomings.

First, the plates now are interspersed throughout the book rather than on glossy paper gathered in one location. This in itself is not a flaw, but one of the reasons for the new format seems to have been to save costs. Some of the images look worse than those in the third edition or are old pictures that lack the sharpness that is easily obtained today through digital photography (e.g. Φ ⁴⁶ [p. 42]; *Lect* 274 [p. 324]; Curetonian Syriac manuscript; p. 97). However, other images are new and improved (Codex Sinaiticus, p. 66; E^a, p. 75).

Second, the section on Important Witnesses to the Text of the New Testament (pp. 52–134) could be greatly expanded. Only eighty Greek manuscripts are listed (pp. 52–94), a mere increase of three from the previous edition. Not mentioned are at least a couple hundred manuscripts that rank as consistently cited witnesses in the Nestle-Aland²⁷ text. To be sure, it would be impractical to *discuss* each one of these other documents. Further, detailed information on many of them is not available. However, one very helpful feature in Kurt and Barbara Aland’s *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989) is the cataloging of hundreds of manuscripts according to their textual affinities. There are flaws in the method the Alands employ, as Metzger and Ehrman point out (pp. 237–38), but since a major preliminary step in solving textual problems is the grouping of witnesses according to their text types and families, help in this direction with significantly more manuscripts

would be welcome. Since the section on witnesses in Metzger-Ehrman is already laid out according to the Gregory-Aland classifications rather than as a running narrative, to add more discrete units of information could be easily accomplished.

Third, although Text of the New Testament has an excellent section on scribal errors (pp. 250–71) and several detailed illustrations of textual problems that incorporate discussions of internal evidence (pp. 316–43), the overall discussion of internal evidence is a bit underdeveloped. Two examples (among several candidates) reveal this. The discussion of the textual problem ἦπιοι vs. νῆπιοι in 1 Thess 2:7 (pp. 328–30) asserts that internal must be given weight over external evidence, and thus the “gentle” reading is to be preferred. Yet there is no mention of a principal internal argument on the part of νῆπιοι, viz., the likely punctuation of the text in light of Pauline style—an argument that significantly tones down the judgment that such a reading is almost an “absurdity.” The treatment of Mark 16:9–20 (pp. 322–27) includes just a few lines about intrinsic evidence (pp. 323, 325), even though the internal evidence against the longer reading is almost surely as strong as, if not stronger than, the external evidence. One gets the sense, by the sheer amount of space devoted to it, that external evidence is far more important than internal when it comes to making textual decisions. To be sure, a great deal more discussion of external evidence is required in order to get the beginning student up to speed on the issues in this field, but even taking this into consideration the weight seems to be disproportionate.

Fourth, the critiques of other viewpoints are often so irenic that much that could be said goes unmentioned. No one could charge Metzger with being pugilistic, but his discussions occasionally are too bridled. For example, in the examination of rigorous eclecticism (pp. 222–26) some of the strongest arguments against the view are not stated, nor is Gordon Fee’s classic essay, “Rigorous or Reasoned Eclecticism—Which?” (where many of these arguments are to be found), even cited.

Fifth, flowing out of this fourth critique is the fact that as thorough a revision as this volume is, it has not been revised enough. A clear demarcation between Metzger’s contribution and Ehrman’s can often be seen. This, of course, is to be expected, but the result sometimes borders on internal contradiction or at least statements that lack sufficient nuance (cf. p. 275 about the unqualified lack of controls on the texts of the earliest manuscripts, followed two pages later by an assertion about “conscious and conscientious control exercised in the copying of the books of the New Testament” by early Alexandrian scribes; pp. 277–78). The dual authorship nature of this work also reveals itself, to some degree, in differences of tone and certitude. It would have been helpful had the preface indicated which section was written by whom. Without such, a new generation of readers will attribute characteristics to both authors indiscriminately. Finally, a careful reading of the fourth edition in comparison with previous editions reveals an occasional erratum that has gone uncorrected for decades. For example, the statement that “all majuscules” have the reading εἰ τις σπλάγγνα in Phil 2:1 (p. 271), repeated from all previous editions, ignores both codices K and Ψ (which have the reading εἰ τι).

Sixth, other errata are sprinkled throughout the book. Most egregious are the numerous index inconsistencies, lacunae, and mistakes. For example, on p. 293 Mark 10:14 is incorrectly cited as 10:41, and ὀργισθεῖς is twice misspelled ὀργισθεῖς. In the index, several codices are listed in two different places without cross-referencing (e.g. codices A, B, C); page references are sometimes listed incorrectly (e.g. a reference to Wallace on p. 221 is listed as on p. 331); names are spelled incorrectly (e.g. Coimfort for Comfort); numerous citations are missing (e.g. Codex Sinaiticus on p. 314, n. 30; Codex Vaticanus on p. 259, n. 10, p. 289, n. 45; no individual papyri are mentioned in the index). All in all, the proofing, especially of the index, is not up to the standard that previous editions displayed.

Finally, one might have hoped for more discussion of *desiderata* remaining for the discipline. To be sure, some discussions are present, but only a trickle of the task remaining is noted. This may be a quibble since the tome already wears many hats. Yet precisely because it goes beyond a mere introduction, one could wish for more.

Lest the casual reader think that these criticisms outweigh the strengths of the fourth edition, let me reiterate: Metzger-Ehrman's *Text of the New Testament* remains the standard handbook on NT textual criticism. Even with its few flaws, this volume should be read, underlined, digested, and quoted by all students of the NT text. It rightfully deserves to be within arm's reach of all who study the sacred Greek Scriptures.

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The Original Story: God, Israel, and the World. By John Barton and Julia Bowden. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, xvi + 318 pp., \$20.00 paper.

"Boring and barbaric"—that is how John Barton of the University of Oxford and Julia Bowden of Guildford High School characterize the way many people today view the OT. Their purpose in *The Original Story* is "to open up the Old Testament for readers in the twenty-first century" (p. vii) and so correct such misconceptions.

Five sections comprise the authors' effort in this volume. They begin with introductory matters including OT canon and content, Israel's geography and setting in the ancient Near East, and major literary genres. Section 2 covers notable OT themes such as God and his relationship with Israel, human nature, ethical concerns, theodicy, and "religious experiences." In the third section, "History and the OT," the authors discuss issues of historicity and truth, asking what we can know about Israel's early history, the monarchy, the exile and return, and the second temple period. OT institutions provide the focus for section 4, featuring Israelite society, prophecy, worship, wisdom, historians and "story-tellers," law, and (strangely) "apocalyptic literature." In the final segment the authors examine OT source, form, redaction, and literary criticism.

Certainly the breadth of material this volume attempts to cover is impressive. Accordingly, the engaged reader will find much for which to commend the authors. It is hard to imagine a more reader-friendly layout than they provide. The format includes wide margins for note taking as well as sidebars with additional data on key terms, people, and subjects. Other handy graphics include simple Hebrew language and word studies plus clearly presented charts and diagrams. The chapter on archaeology is an excellent primer for anyone seeking an orientation to the subject. Barton and Bowden offer insightful comments on a number of fronts: background on the idea of "covenant" (pp. 53–64); a critique of Drosnin's *The Bible Code* (p. 268); and the acknowledgment of historical roots (p. 122) and a "foundation of fact" underlying parts of the biblical record (p. 135).

Despite these commendable traits, however, the authors offer almost no quarter to the reader who takes seriously the OT's own testimony regarding its nature as revealed truth from the mouth of God. I take issue with the work at several points, though I will limit the "bones" I pick to five. First, I found myself puzzled repeatedly at the authors' unabashed devotion to the arbitrary, much-discredited conclusions of modernistic source criticism. In spite of Rendtorff, Carr, Whybray, Kitchen, McConville, Blenkinsopp, and others who have insisted that Wellhausen dogma no longer offers a common presupposition for OT study, the authors seem stuck in a time warp defending it: "Modern biblical scholarship takes Wellhausen's basic scheme as its starting point . . . all sub-

sequent biblical studies are ‘after Wellhausen’—there can be no putting back the clock to a time before his breakthrough” (p. 280). The point is that the clock has moved *ahead* to a time where reconstructing hypothetical sources is a relic of the past. Rhetorical and canonical criticism, a more sophisticated understanding of linguistic patterning and transmission history, and inherent logical problems with the theory have advanced OT critical method beyond speculative conjecture in the great race to put faces on J, E, D, and P.

A second observation about Barton and Bowden is their deficient treatment of literary criticism. Although it receives a nod in their final section, the majority of their attention swings disproportionately to the roles of Auerbach and Alter, then to reader response theory and to feminist and liberation theology. More needs to be said about the role of the author, rhetorical devices, poetics, and formalism, as well as the contributions of key figures such as Berlin, Sternberg, Bar-Erfat, Alonso-Schökel, and Longman. For example, consideration of rhetorical style and structure would answer some of the problems they raise with regard to Joshua 3–4 (p. 280). This diminution is not surprising, however, since Barton dismisses structuralism elsewhere (*Reading the OT*).

Third, Barton and Bowden seem conflicted regarding the reliability of OT history. Though they acknowledge a historical “feel” to the Bible, the authors work from an obvious skepticism toward and even a denial of its accuracy at times. The text “is far from supplying straightforward historical reporting of events” (p. 125); instead, it is a chronicled reshaping of legends, tales, and traditions to fit a theologically motivated construct (pp. 120–26). Consequently, Genesis 3 is no more factual than Santa’s sliding down the chimney (p. 121). The Pentateuch “is not a work of history” (p. 132), and Abraham and Moses are “figures of legend” (p. 131). In fact, say the authors, “It is not clear that we are dealing with genuine historical information in the OT” until the eighth century BC (pp. 133–34). Ruth, Jonah, and Esther are imaginary characters (p. 243). OT history may be called “faction,” they suggest—real events blended with imaginary ones (p. 28)—though it is anybody’s guess as to definitive criteria distinguishing the one from the other.

The fourth problem with the authors concerns me the most. Despite the inclusive nature of *The Original Story*, something major seemed lacking as I read it. What is missing is any effort to take the claims of the OT text seriously as revelation. Does this book spring from the mind of God? Evidently not, according to Barton and Bowden, since the primary nature of the OT involves merely what Israel thought about religion. This mantra recurs with tedium in such phrases as: “believed they had encountered God” (p. vii); “ideas about God” (p. vii); “human insights into religious questions” (p. vii); “what biblical authors believed about God” (p. 9); “stories that ancient Israelites told themselves about their past” (p. 9); and “primarily the religious ideas of people in ancient Israel” (p. 19). The only consideration that the biblical text might represent more than human ideology comes on the final two pages of the book despite the likelihood that most of the people who engage the OT in close, disciplined study do so with this very presupposition.

Fifth, the effect of such a suspicious treatment of the OT turns out to be anything but what the title suggests. If the Bible’s accounts are conflated, redacted, and legendary, then we really do not know “the original story.” The redactors are the real authors, which is exactly what Barton and Bowden contend, and “we can never be certain they got it right” (p. 300). These surreptitious editors “find subtle ways of forcing us to read (the text) against its natural sense. . . . They throw us off the scent of the original meaning” (p. 297). The alternative, though, is for “biblical scholars to go back to reading the Bible in the way ordinary believers read it, as a text that has something powerful to say to us about God” (p. 310); but if that is the case, say the authors, “much of what we have written in this book becomes irrelevant!” (p. 306).

Readers seeking an introduction to the OT based on its own claims as *both* a divine and a human book would benefit more from the work by Dillard and Longman, the volumes in InterVarsity's *Dictionary of the Old Testament*, or Baker's four-volume *Handbook* series on the OT.

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Defending God: Biblical Responses to the Problem of Evil. By James L. Crenshaw. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, 275 pp., \$37.50.

With this work, James Crenshaw offers "the fruit of a lifetime of research" (p. viii). While not the most evangelical-friendly work, *Defending God* does offer the reader a summary of major responses to this issue, and surprisingly, Crenshaw's conclusion is akin to an evangelical response.

Since he holds that various compositional layers within the biblical text make a diachronic approach impossible, Crenshaw approaches this study with the goal of tracing the biblical responses to the problem of evil in a synchronic fashion (p. 18). However, he does see logical progression from one response to another, which necessitates some diachronism. The base of his search includes 4 Ezra and 2 Baruch. Crenshaw employs the contemporary methodology of close reading, and he agrees with the modern secular academy regarding the nature of Scripture (p. 13).

The book is well structured, containing an introduction and conclusion, eleven chapters, copious endnotes and bibliography, and Scripture, person, and subject indices. Also, the chapter titles are revealingly indicative of content.

In the introduction based upon Exod 34:6–7, Crenshaw adroitly poses the question of how both justice and mercy can exist within the biblical deity—the heart of theodicy. He then groups chapters 1–3 into the first section, "Spreading the Blame Around," which focuses on the deific answers. Chapter 1 addresses the issue of practical atheism. By examining Psalms 10; 14; and Prov 30:1–4, Crenshaw notes that at least a few authors ventured to deal with the hypothetical question, "What if there is no God?" Since this idea was not acceptable to pious Israelites, chapter 2 addresses the idea of other gods causing the evil. Crenshaw postulates that Ps 82:6–7 reflects the existence of other gods, though he does note that Isa 41:21–24 denies their existence. If this approach fails to answer the problem of evil, perhaps a demonic presence will. Chapter 3 scrutinizes this idea with an examination of both Abraham's offering of Isaac and the prologue and epilogue of Job. Crenshaw is particularly offended by the immolation of Isaac pericope, but he uses Job as the basis for his answer to theodicy. He includes Gen 22:1–19, because in his opinion the narrative reflects the dark side of the deity.

Chapters 4–7 are in the second major section, "Redefining God." Herein, Crenshaw examines possible answers from both the human and deific sides. Chapter 4 focuses upon human freedom, and Crenshaw appears to be a thoroughgoing open theist as he examines human freedom in Ezekiel 18 and divine vulnerability in Isaiah 30. Chapter 5 relates the idea of a deity conflicted between justice and mercy as revealed in Genesis 18, Jonah, and Joel. Chapter 6 describes the idea of suffering leading to growth in virtue from the Apocrypha and the prophets, and chapter 7 examines the classic principle of retribution where the victim is to blame. Job's friends, the man born blind (John 9), and Israelite historiography are the examples.

Chapters 8–11 comprise the last major section, "Shifting to the Human Scene." Chapter 8 explores suffering as atonement—either earned by individual merit or

appropriated vicariously. While Sirach 15–18 illustrates individual merit, the death of David and Bathsheba's child, Jephthah's foolish vow, and Joseph's brother Judah manifest the idea of vicarious suffering. Crenshaw does address Isa 52:13–53:12, the classic passage of substitutionary atonement, noting that early Christians identified the servant as Jesus. Chapter 9 looks at an ultimate answer to theodicy: life beyond the grave. Crenshaw postulates that daring authors ventured to show that YHWH is sovereign even over death. Relevant Scripture passages come from Isaiah, Psalms, and other OT books. The idea later gave rise to the Pharisees and the Sadducees, yet further NT exploration could shed much light in this chapter. Chapter 10 plumbs the depths of humanity's theological ignorance. The Bible both reveals God and reveals that we cannot fully know or understand him. Here, Crenshaw examines Ecclesiastes, 4 Ezra, and 2 Baruch. On page 175, Crenshaw conjectures that "if all knowledge of God and his ways is partial, might the characterization of YHWH in the Bible—which depends on that knowledge—be only partially accurate?" This statement provides the launching pad for Crenshaw's conclusion: the author of Job conquers the anthropocentricity of the biblical text.

Chapter 11 articulates Crenshaw's conclusion—disinterested righteousness. He applauds the author of Job for refusing to have God "appear in the palace of justice, choosing instead the arena of creation" (p. 178). With this technique, God appears greater than the projections of humanity ascribed to him by other biblical authors. The reader of Job understands that "God plays by different rules from those projected on the deity by human rationality" and that "neither criticism of the deity for failing to implement justice by human standards nor defense of divine conduct receives endorsement" (p. 189). The author of Job has brilliantly probed the question of whether or not a hidden motive for piety exists; or, stated differently, whether a person can live out "disinterested righteousness." Crenshaw holds that creation itself was an act of pure grace; therefore people have no grounds for maintaining that God owes them anything beyond the gift of life already bestowed, "irrespective of desert" (p. 190). This chapter is serendipitous.

Reminiscent of Roland Murphy, Crenshaw masterfully conveys issues with an economy of words. His writing is fluid, accessible, and informative. He covers most of the major, substantive responses to this perplexing issue. However, a cursory glance at his Scripture index (p. 270) reveals a paucity of NT references. The book of Revelation contains the ultimate answer regarding God's justice, though not the most palatable answer to modern readers. In Revelation, readers glimpse not just life beyond the grave, but also judgment, and, thankfully, mercy beyond the grave. Quite clear is Crenshaw's assumption: the biblical text is a predominantly fictive account that has been absolutized by Jews and Christians (pp. 13, 181), thus "reifying God." Not so clear is the reason why the last book of the Christian canon has not been examined.

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The Twilight of the Gods: Polytheism in the Hebrew Bible. By David Penchansky. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005, xii + 108 pp., \$19.95.

"This book represents a subversive reading. It challenges twenty-five centuries of tradition that has read the entire Bible with a monotheistic lens" (p. 91). So begins the conclusion of this book. Penchansky attempts to show that belief in the existence of gods besides Yahweh was always part and parcel of Hebrew religion in the earlier stages of

OT history. He asserts that this claim is justified by the evidence from the biblical text itself and states that the writers of Scripture recognized the existence of a divine pantheon of whom Yahweh was generally (though not always) supreme. He refers to this ancient belief as a broader monotheism, a type of henotheism.

The book is divided into two parts. The first is entitled “The Gods of Ancient Israel,” and the second bears the name “The Goddesses of Ancient Israel.” The first chapter has the title “The Wrath of Chemosh: When Yahweh Lost a War.” Here Penchansky presents the view, based on his understanding of 2 Kgs 3:27, that the words “Great wrath came down on Israel” refer to the wrath of Chemosh (pp. 9–11), though Chemosh is not mentioned in the text.

In chapter 4, “The Dissolution of the Divine Council,” the author points to several passages that in his view indicate that Yahweh, who was at one point merely a member of the divine council, was later placed in the position of prominence. His support for this view rests primarily on Psalm 82. He states, “Psalm 82 argues for monotheism by saying that Yahweh is the only god left, the best of the lot. It is *achronological monotheism* (emphasis his) that says that there is only one god now, although it has not always been so. Yahweh defeated the other gods in a divine law court, and now is the only god left standing. Therefore, other gods must have existed in the past” (p. 38). He states further that “El convenes a meeting of the gods. Yahweh is not the director and chairman of the board, but instead attends the meeting as a member” (p. 36). In this statement he visualizes the Ugaritic pantheon. However, it is *Elohim* who stands in the midst of the assembly, not the Canaanite El. In addition, there is no mention of Yahweh in the Psalm. Without going into the differing interpretations of who the “gods” are, it is clear that Penchansky’s point finds no support in the text.

Chapter 5, “Anti-Idol Polemic: An Attack on the Gods of Israel,” is the last chapter on the gods of Israel. Here Penchansky refers to the attacks by the prophets on the idol gods, most notably the attack of “Second Isaiah,” whom the author accuses of misunderstanding the nature of the worship of idols in his satirical attacks (e.g. Isaiah 44; see p. 43).

In part 2, chapter 6, Penchansky views the personified “wisdom” (*hokmah*) of the book of Proverbs as Yahweh’s daughter (based on Prov 8:22–31). In chapter 7 he includes “Lady Zion” as one of Yahweh’s daughters. He states that the “Lady Zion” theology is a development from a Jebusite “Lady Zion” myth.

The book has value in drawing together the views of those who seek to find polytheism in various forms as part of Israel’s historic past. There is an eight-page bibliography of authors who have written on this subject, largely those who support Penchansky’s views in one way or another.

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The Persian Empire. By Lindsay Allen. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, 224 pp., \$39.95.

Lindsay Allen’s book is a must read for the scholar who is interested in the Persian Empire, the rise of Alexander the Great, and the biblical books of Esther, Ezra-Nehemiah, and Daniel. The historical, geographic, and archaeological detail that permeates the book through the use of primary sources and archaeological data makes this work stand apart from its counterparts.

The first chapter, “The Roots of Persian Rule,” is valuable because it shows not only the genesis of the Persian Empire that was anchored around Cyrus the Great, but also

illuminates the embryonic stages of the Persians that originated in the land ruled by the Medes (p. 15). Allen brilliantly surfaces the political and religious tensions that existed and accelerated the rise and fall of Assyria and Babylon as these events paved the way for the ascension of the Persians as the world power of the day.

The second chapter, "Conquest and Politics," focuses on the military conquests and political strategy of Darius I (522–486 BC) and Xerxes I (486–465 BC). Most remarkable is Allen's use of primary sources to bolster her arguments and to give insights into Darius's rise to the throne amid political conflict. The use of archaeological finds displayed throughout the book are invaluable in clearly communicating relevant information with regard to Darius's military campaigns in Greece and his son Xerxes's accession to the throne. Allen's intellectual authenticity and scholarly integrity are displayed when she admits when supposed evidence cannot be corroborated easily instead of making statements that cannot be confirmed (p. 52).

The third chapter, "Royal Capitals," enumerates the different citadels that at one point became the capital of the Persian Empire. Towering at 1800 meters, Ecbatana (Hegmataneh) was a key city during the Achaemenid dynasty and served as summer residence for the court (p. 62). One of the most renowned Persian capitals was Susa, a political and cultural center for centuries (p. 65). Tablet fragments uncovered reveal that Darius I engineered building projects early in his reign and provide a glimpse into the multi-faceted cultures of Medes, Egyptians, Sardians, and Babylonians present in Persia. Both Xerxes and Artaxerxes II continued building incursions in the capital between Mesopotamia and the Zagros mountains. The best preserved of the Achaemenid palace complexes is at Persepolis, the citadel founded by Darius the Great around 518 BC (p. 72). Before Alexander the Great destroyed it in 331 BC the city was known as Parsa. Darius I, Xerxes, and Artaxerxes I built both palaces and royal residences. Windows into the Persians' religious practices and economic practices are seen in the Persepolis Fortification Tablets, a collection of cuneiform writings discovered between 1931 and 1939. Babylon needs no introduction for the ANE scholar, yet few would correlate Babylon with Persia (p. 81). And that is for good reason. Although the city was considered a prized conquest for Cyrus and Darius, Babylon spent extended periods of times rebelling against the Persian kings even during the reign of Xerxes. Allen closes this chapter by making the case that Pasargadae was the oldest of the capitals of the Achaemenid empire, built by Cyrus the Great around 550 BC. The Greek historian Arrian attests that the tomb of Cyrus was found in "the royal paradise in Pasargadae" (p. 85).

The fourth chapter, "The Rivals: Regional Rulers and Reflections of Power," is valuable because of its insights into the power struggles between Xerxes II, Sogdianus, and Darius II following the death of their father Artaxerxes I. Xerxes's reign lasted only 45 days before he was assassinated by his brother Sogdianus, who in turn was killed by his brother Darius II, also known as Ochus (p. 102). The chapter also mentions Darius's conflict with the Medes, one of the few incidents in his nineteen-year reign. His son Artaxerxes II reigned in his place, but not before he was challenged by his brother Cyrus the Younger in the battle at Cunaxa in Babylonia (p. 104). Cyrus was killed in battle, and Artaxerxes's reign was marked by successful building projects at Susa, Ecbatana, and Babylon. Militarily, he had success against the Greeks, but struggled with the Egyptians who successfully rebelled during his reign (pp. 108–9).

The fifth chapter, "Peoples, Communication and Religion," relays vital information regarding the religious practices and beliefs of the Persians. Persian kings were polytheistic in both their faith and practice. Darius worshiped Ahuramazda as well as other unidentified gods (p. 122). Besides Ahuramazda, Artaxerxes II worshiped Anahita and Mithras. The Persians were influenced greatly by the Zoroastrian religion, from which they borrowed purity laws and also fire and earth reverence (pp. 128–29). The biblical books of Esther, Daniel, and Ezra-Nehemiah testify to the fact that some Persian kings came to know about Yahweh through their connection with the Jewish communities.

The Bible affirms that some of the kings recognized Yahweh as the Creator God, the One who is sovereign, and in control of history (Ezra 1:1–4; Dan 6:25–28).

The sixth chapter focuses on the end of Persia as an empire and the rise of Alexander the Great. After Alexander conquered a good part of Europe and the Balkans, he turned his face towards Persia. His campaign started in 334 BC and ended with the destruction of Persepolis in 330 BC (p. 133). In the meantime, in his military lust for power, Alexander conquered Syria-Palestine and parts of Egypt, after which he died prematurely in 322 BC (p. 151).

The last chapter, “Legends, Language and Archaeological Discovery,” is not necessary since the information it contains could have easily been incorporated in the previous chapters. However, it does provide a brief yet solid and useful history of the endeavors of archaeologists and scholars who tried to penetrate the mosaic curtain of Iran and its ayatollahs.

I recommend this book without reservation as a great companion to Yamauchi’s *Persia and the Bible*, Bausani’s *Religion in Iran: From Zoroaster to Baha’ullah*, and other more detailed and specialized works pertaining to the Persian Empire.

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Preaching God’s Word. By Terry G. Carter, J. Scott Duvall, and J. Daniel Hays. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005, 299 pp., \$29.99.

This book is an introductory text on the subject of *biblical* preaching—preaching that is soundly rooted in good hermeneutics and exegesis. It is written by three colleagues on the faculty of Ouachita Baptist University, whose driving force in writing the book seems to be twofold: biblical integrity and practicality. They desire that their readers learn early on the necessity of allowing texts to make their own statements rather than importing the preachers’ own agendas into their sermons. They also have arranged the book so that practical steps are explained in a sequential way. These emphases comprise the essential strengths of the book.

This volume is, in effect, a companion volume to an earlier work by J. Scott Duvall and J. Daniel Hays, *Grasping God’s Word: A Hands-on Approach to Reading, Interpreting, and Applying the Bible* (Zondervan, 2001). In fact, the present work reflects the same approach to hermeneutics found in the earlier one and often draws on it rather directly. Chapter 2 of *Preaching God’s Word* is basically a summary presentation of *Grasping God’s Word*, but each chapter in the current work draws on principles found there.

The book is divided into three sections. The authors first deal with the hermeneutical, exegetical, and homiletical steps necessary in sermon writing. In the second section attention is turned to “Preaching the New Testament,” and this is followed by a third section discussing “Preaching the Old Testament.” The first section covers more than half the book, while the other two are quite brief, approximately 50–55 pages each. This brevity limits their usefulness, although some helpful ideas for the novice preacher are found there.

Since the first section discusses homiletics, it may be assumed that Terry Carter was the author, since he is the one identified in the preface as the homiletic teacher among the three. The specific author was not identified, yet he often made references to himself in the first person singular. This was a bit awkward, particularly when personal stories were related.

The homiletical instruction given is rooted in sound theory and practice. In eight chapters the reader is taken from understanding the nature of a biblical sermon through a careful handling of the text, audience analysis, sermonic organization, application, illustration, and delivery. The overall approach is “the big idea” concept popularized by Haddon Robinson but used in varying ways by many other homileticians. The writer of this section shows familiarity with peers from a wide spectrum, yet does not rely on others to make his case. Thus his documentation is not overdone but there as needed.

While much in the book is helpful, there seems to be a lack of breadth. The overall effect is a minimum of information regarding sermon variety, although the authors refer to it several times. There is a relatively brief discussion of the choice between deductive and inductive outlining. Otherwise, a “one approach fits all texts” method is presented with little to indicate how other approaches may be used. Not only is this necessary in view of the various literary genres found in Scripture, but it is also mandated by various kinds of audiences. Again, the authors acknowledge this, but no specific help is given.

The flow of the book’s content is also sometimes troublesome. While sections, chapters, and subheadings are all obvious, the content within chapters, especially the earlier ones in section 1, seems repetitious and even confusing. Each new chapter purports to be a next step in the homiletical process, but the attempt to entwine these with the ten-step hermeneutical approach highlighted at the beginning of these chapters results in a homiletical process that seems a bit circuitous.

On a positive note, numerous examples are used to explain the various homiletical steps, and these concrete examples greatly enhance the discussion. Each chapter concludes with “Review Questions and Assignments,” another helpful feature for a textbook.

Useful as a primer for beginning preachers or even practicing preachers who have had no basic training in homiletics, *Preaching God’s Word* is worthy of recommendation. On the other hand, the book will have limited value for those desiring a fresh or advanced perspective on the preaching task.

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The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem: Judah Under Babylonian Rule. By Oded Lipschits. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, xiv + 474 pp., \$47.50.

The brief period between the fall of Jerusalem’s temple and the beginning of the Persian period is elusive because it is indeed so short. Nevertheless, the biblical text indicates extremely significant changes for the nation of Israel in relation to the covenant and the land. In this work, which commenced as his doctoral dissertation at Tel Aviv University, Oded Lipschits investigates the nature of the Assyrian and Babylonian periods leading up to the destruction of the kingdom of Judah. He surveys the material remains and the demographic evidence for settlement patterns in subsections of Judah, the Negev, and Shephelah, and the tribal area of Benjamin in the interval between the deportation and return. Finally, he focuses on the fall of Jerusalem as we encounter it in 2 Kings 24–25 and Jeremiah 37–44.

In this multi-faceted approach, Lipschits intends to demonstrate that the 70 years of exile to Babylonia were not the “dark ages” that the Deuteronomic editor/redactor, writing from the perspective of the “returnees,” made them out to be. In fact, even though the Babylonians utterly devastated Jerusalem as part of their program, there was a demonstrable continuity in population and material culture especially in the tribal area of Benjamin and in towns of northern Judah. In the end, we cannot make definitive

declarations about the Babylonian period, but we can draw some conclusions about the two disparate populations of the nation of Israel at that time as they are represented in the text. One is the band of exiles from whom a small group would return to Zion. The other group is much larger but is given short shrift in the biblical text; they are those who remained in the land.

Chapter 1 surveys ANE history with particular focus on the abrupt transition from Assyrian to Babylonian rule, acknowledging the complications created by Egyptian influences. Egypt had economic and strategic interests in controlling the Levant, and the Egyptians expanded all the way to the Euphrates, the *de facto* boundary between Egypt and the dominant power in Mesopotamia. The presence of Egypt, of course, greatly affected internal politics in the final years of Judah.

Chapter 2 focuses on the geopolitical processes by which the tiny kingdom of Judah was swallowed up in international politics. Judah's loss of independence was part of a more extensive Babylonian policy to hold the provinces in the Levant that had been controlled by Assyria and to prepare for invasion of Egypt. Initially, small kingdoms like Judah were able to maintain internal freedom, although they paid heavy tribute. The final policy in Babylon was to remove the rebellious Davidic dynasty and systematically destroy Jerusalem, because it was a center of unrest. Gedaliah was appointed governor in Mizpah with the intent to remove any sense of the importance of Jerusalem. The number of those fleeing to Egypt after Gedaliah's murder was likely quite small, even though the biblical text makes it sound as if the land was left empty. The biblical text has concealed the presence of those who remained in the land. Instead, it focuses on the exiled elite because the return to Zion was part of an ideological message.

Chapter 3 addresses apparent changes in the borders of Judah between the end of the Iron Age and the beginning of the Persian period. Lipschits reads the town list in Joshua 15 as giving the picture of the kingdom in Josiah's day. The city lists in Ezra-Nehemiah are deemed literary constructions shaped by ideological considerations, emphasizing the importance of those who returned to Zion. While there is no archaeological evidence of a massive deportation and return, there is evidence of those who were permitted to live in the region between Benjamin and the northern Judean hills.

In Chapter 4, Lipschits addresses the material culture in Israel from the Assyrian to the Persian periods as it informs our understanding of the history of Judah under Babylonian rule. Based on surveys, Lipschits concludes that there was an approximate 70% decline in overall population between the end of the Iron Age and Persian period. The only place where the population decline was not noticeable was in the northern Judean hills. There was also no evidence of destruction in the sixth century in Benjamin. Instead, we see a decline in cities of Benjamin at end of sixth and into the fifth century, indicating that the center went back to Jerusalem.

Chapter 5 turns to the biblical text and biblical historiography, giving a close reading of 2 Kings 24–25 and Jeremiah 37–44 to determine whether there is evidence of distinctive theological perspectives of the two groups—the exiles and those who remained in the land. From a theological perspective, those who remained viewed the exiles as having sinned and therefore as meriting punishment while considering themselves as the people of God. From a sociological perspective, it may be that the lives of those who remained improved because prior social structures favoring the elite were gone. In fact, when the exiles returned, there were likely tensions because their property had been appropriated by those who remained. Lipschits addresses at length the composition of the Deuteronomistic history. The historical accounts were essential for addressing right to land, status of Jerusalem, role of house of David, and the relation between the Diaspora and the land. The author also reviews extensively the challenging textual and compositional issues in Jeremiah.

A summary chapter reviews and synthesizes the evidence in the previous chapters. This is followed by multiple categories of additional questions that need to be addressed, many of which do not really seem to be answerable. This part of the final chapter could best be described as an appendix. The bibliography is followed by indices of authors, Scripture passages, and ancient places and sites.

The Fall and Rise of Jerusalem prompts the reader to review 2 Kings 24–25 and Jeremiah 37–44 with greater sensitivity to the way the text presents “those who remained” along with the exiles who later returned. In the end, however, it appears that some of the most significant conclusions in this regard are founded on an approach to both the historical and prophetic texts that presumes it is necessary to dissect them rather than read them as a whole. The author seems to spend a good deal of time and space stating that manifold differences of opinion exist and that there is much we do not know. This very detailed work is painstaking in its analysis of every angle of the relevant issues. The book is slow reading and does seem to be exceptionally repetitious, perhaps because the author chose to address each issue from a range of perspectives. Because he is knitting together a synthetic treatment, there are numerous references to what is yet forthcoming and what has already been presented. Each reference binds the presentation together, but it is a tedious approach. It is a typical published dissertation with exhaustive and comprehensive citation of secondary sources and volumes of important details in the footnotes. Those most drawn to this text would clearly be historical geographers and graduate students in related disciplines.

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Making Wise the Simple: The Torah in Christian Faith and Practice. By Johanna W. H. van Wijk-Bos. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, 329 pp., \$20.00 paper.

The place of the Hebrew Scriptures in the history of Christianity has gone from common knowledge among early Jewish believers to a decidedly secondary role in Protestantism today. Johanna W. H. van Wijk-Bos attempts to revive interest in the Christian OT by seeking out its shared message with the NT. This shared message may surprise those who would expect it to revolve around redemptive history. Her conclusion finds the shared message to be clearly social in nature.

The bookends for van Wijk-Bos’s study are extreme. One end finds those who hold “the biblical text to be free of error and literally true . . . all of Scripture is equally authoritative as the word of God,” overlooking the “historical circumstances of the text” (p. xv). Far at the other side is her other bookend: those that hold that “large parts of Scripture, mostly belonging to the ‘old’ Testament, are irrelevant to modern concerns and issues of faith.” She charges that this approach “practices a persistent neglect in regard to the wisdom of the text and its capacity to respond to predicaments of every age—in short, its power to connect the listener to God” (p. xvi).

The OT, when placed in a subsidiary role, van Wijk-Bos notes, causes us to interpret the Torah as “directives, stories, and myths” (p. 13). She wants us to draw closer to the text to improve our understanding of its message then and now. Seeking to open a dialogue between the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, the foundation upon which van Wijk-Bos will build her final conclusion, she compares texts. Arguing for equality she firmly declares, “Old Testament texts do not stand in need of a text from the New Testament for their interpretation. The Torah does not depend on the New Testament

for an exploration of its theological importance and relevance for the Christian life today" (p. 69).

The author finds evidence for a covenant relationship when quoting 1 Pet 2:9–10, "a chosen race, a royal realm of priests, a holy nation" (van Wijk-Jos uses her own translations throughout her book), and thus sees the emerging Christians as a chosen, covenant community (p. 20). Exodus 19:3–6 clearly identifies Israel as "God's own people," as many Scripture texts verify (p. 16). Comparing the two passages, van Wijk-Bos rejects the concept that "all the privileges which once belonged to Israel now belong to the Christian Church." Rather, the emphasis is now on the "continuity of the church with the covenant people of the Old Testament" (pp. 21–22).

Much of *Making Wise the Simple* is spent discussing who one's neighbor is, what care should be taken of widows, orphans, and the poor, and how to treat the alien and strangers in the land. In van Wijk-Bos's mind, the Bible teaches in both Testaments that "outsiders in their societies are the very ones who are 'God's people'" (p. 25). The Torah describes God as "consistently on the side of the poor, the weak, the vulnerable" (p. 68).

The author spends three quarters of her book with a mostly helpful overview of the religious development of the children of Israel's faith into Judaism. Concluding that the themes of the stranger and the needy are prominently mentioned, van Wijk-Bos reduces Judaism to a religion that cares for strangers. She then shows the connection between responsibility to the stranger, found dominant in her reading the message of the Torah, with Christ's core message.

Since more than three quarters of *Making Wise the Simple* is spent in OT texts, only in the last forty pages of the text does the author arrive at "Christ and the Torah." Here van Wijk-Bos states, "The question is whether Jesus' concept of total dedication to God as depicted in the Gospels is on a continuum with understandings we gleaned from our overview of the Torah, or whether his orientation and teaching take us in a different direction" (p. 264). This is the crucial question of the book. Was Jesus a follower of the commandment of God to love one's neighbor? Jesus did, according to van Wijk-Bos, teach a gospel consistent with the core message of the Torah.

Examining the Good Samaritan account (Luke 10:25–37), van Wijk-Bos notes, "In line with the Torah, Jesus applied his teaching specifically to those in need. The sick, the disabled, the outcast, those without social or religious privilege were those who drew his attention" (p. 268). The central question, "Who is my neighbor?" becomes the central question of Christianity.

Paul's teachings carry on the message of the Torah; from Rom 12:9–13 and Gal 5:1, van Wijk-Bos highlights only the phrase "love your neighbor" (pp. 282–84). Before concluding the book, she discusses Paul's views on gender relations and finds them substandard to those of the Torah, with substandard being a relative term (284–91). Paul is accused of detaching Christianity from a covenant relationship with God, leaving it adrift from the commandments. Judaism was seen as dead under the weight of the law. Christianity, on the other hand, was free in Christ (p. 293). As van Wijk-Bos puts it, "Setting Christ and the law in opposition creates a false dichotomy that has kept Christianity alienated from a crucial part of its heritage. Jesus' teaching shows that his application of the law of neighbor love is on a direct continuum with Torah teaching" (p. 294).

Returning to the theme she began with, van Wijk-Bos argues that "Christian readings of the Bible all too often relegate material from the Hebrew Bible to a position of, at best secondary, at worst negative value in relation to that of the New Testament" (p. 302). On this point many academics and pastors can plead guilty to a lesser or greater extent.

However, while noting love of one's neighbor and concern for the needy as part of a shared Judeo-Christian message, reducing the Christian message to only a social gospel is a fatal mistake (see the writings of Walter Rauschenbusch). Trying to get Paul's

views of gender relations to coincide with the views of the Torah was a matter of degrees. They were not far apart.

Making Wise the Simple makes an interesting exercise in reductionism, but one must conclude that covenant in both the Torah and the NT meant far more than love of one's neighbor.

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Joshua. A Theological Exposition of Sacred Scripture. By Adolph L. Harstad. Concordia Commentary Series. St. Louis: Concordia, 2004, xxxii + 906 pp., \$42.99.

Adolph Harstad has written a massive commentary on the book of Joshua in the Concordia Commentary series. The goal of the series is to provide an aid to those who are engaged in communicating God's word, especially from a Lutheran perspective, with an emphasis upon fulfillment in Jesus Christ. Several pictures (icons) appear in margins to identify repeated areas of discussion (e.g. baptism, eschatology).

Harstad's discussion of Joshua follows the book's emphasis on conquest, occupation, and final challenges with a four-point outline that divides the initial chapters into preparation (Josh 1:1–5:12) and conquest (Josh 5:13–12:24). After a brief introduction each section provides a translation, notes on the text, and commentary. Interspersed are several excursions on key topics. While most of these are expected (e.g. warfare, covenant), some are unusual (e.g. Hebrew verbs in the border descriptions).

The author emphasizes the importance of biblical inspiration and the study of the text. He shows a keen awareness of text-critical matters, but there is little interest in historical-critical issues, since for him they detract from the content. Brief mentions of "negative" criticism (mostly redaction criticism) are made, but there is no discussion of related issues. There is also an obvious silence on current trends (e.g. feminism, ethnic theology, etc.).

In addition, there is no real discussion of history, historiography, or the exegesis of historical narrative. And while some rhetorical features are noted, this is not a key feature of the commentary. So, for example, the discussion of Rahab (pp. 112–20) concentrates on Joshua's wisdom in sending out spies, Rahab's occupation and lies (lesser deceptions and marks of faith since they were against her fellow Canaanites), and her faith in light of the NT. Granted, her faith in the Lord is central, but greater sensitivity to literary development would enhance one's understanding of the theological message. Joshua and the spies open and close the narrative, but it centers on Rahab. She rescues the spies, makes them swear the oath, and directs the king's men. Indeed, such narrative clues enhance the theological message.

A great strength of this work is the copious notes on each verse. Lexical references abound, and the constant link with reference grammars (Waltke and O'Connor, Joüon, Williams) is very helpful. In light of the increasing availability of electronic resources, the parsing of each verb (especially at the beginning) and the statistical enumeration of word occurrences (OT and Joshua) seem extravagant. Quite helpful are the frequent references to Qumran and the LXX.

Another strength of the work is the author's sensitivity to geography. Harstad notes the significance, name, and location (where known) of places in Joshua, acknowledging his dependence upon Aharoni and others. With more significant places the summary of geography quickly moves toward its metaphorical use in Scripture. Harstad, for example, appears to endorse the allegorical concept of Israel's crossing Jordan as

picturing entrance into heaven (pp. 161–63), while rolling away the reproach at Gilgal “anticipates” forgiveness (rolling away of sin) at Golgotha (p. 237).

Less emphasis is placed on the ANE environment or customs. More obvious links are noted (Amarna letters, Egyptian campaigns), but few are expanded. Reference to Egyptian or Assyrian art is given for the custom of placing the foot on the neck (Josh 10:24), but there is little amplification of the custom, and no references are provided.

Harstad, who is conversant with archaeology, provides brief notes about key places such as Ai, Hazor, and Jericho (pp. 301–2, 121–22, 451). The long controversy over Jericho’s occupation is summarized with reference to Bryant Wood’s assessment of Kenyon’s work (p. 122). With Ai, the possibility of site misidentification is raised in light of the suggestions of other scholars (Hoerth, Livingston, and Wood, p. 302), while Israel’s destruction of Hazor is linked with Late Bronze destruction levels (p. 451).

Perhaps the greatest problem with the book is its movement between the OT and the NT. Harstad decries spiritualizing the text and an allegorical method, but does not clearly explain his own method. So he sees a “typological” correspondence between Joshua and Jesus (the new Joshua), while city burning “prefigures” coming eternal fire (p. 28). Stepping on the necks of enemies “points to” Christ’s crushing Satan’s head (p. 30) and excommunication in the NT “corresponds to” the OT death penalty (p. 104). The ark “portends” the incarnation (p. 155), and legislation about the cities of refuge “anticipates” the atonement of Christ, while the Christian church “compares” to a city of refuge (p. 635). Such comments do support the Christological emphasis of the series, but ultimately confuse believers who are seeking a clear hermeneutic for applying the text.

Areas of theological concern are consistently raised through the book. The Lord orchestrated the destruction of the Canaanites. Their ultimate rejection of God’s gracious attempts to work with them led to their destruction out of which came Israel’s inheritance of the land. In moving toward the NT and today Harstad leans upon Luther’s position that it was a task for Israel in that period and not the church. In the NT era, the Lord is “setting aright all that has gone wrong” (p. 469). Granted the world needs the gospel, but how does one correctly bridge the gap to the postmodern world? It would appear the preaching of the gospel is the hermeneutic for understanding and applying the OT.

By way of final assessment, the exegetical notes are the most helpful part of the volume, especially for those with a basic understanding of Hebrew. Students of Joshua will find insight in the text notes. Harstad is also to be commended for his strong view of inspiration as well as his desire to emphasize the gospel and person of Jesus Christ. Yet, the commentary is weak on theological discussion, not so much because of its chosen Lutheran perspective, but because of its failure to engage other voices and to provide a helpful apologetic on Joshua. I was a bit disappointed by the author’s failure to develop a clear hermeneutical method that would aid today’s preachers and teachers in bridging the gap between the OT and the good news of Jesus Christ.

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Samuel, Kings and Chronicles: A Harmony of Histories. Ed. Jason L. Snyder. Victoria, BC: Trafford, 2005, 486 pp., \$40.00.

Jason Snyder was motivated to compile this synopsis while teaching a course on Kings and Chronicles. The existing harmonies did not provide his essential need—the

complete text of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles in order and without alteration, together with their associated parallels.

Professors interested in this work are likely familiar with the earlier harmonies of William D. Crockett (*A Harmony of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1951]) and James D. Newsome, Jr. (*A Synoptic Harmony of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986]). Snyder's work is arranged differently and may disappoint those looking for an up-to-date replacement for those earlier works. Snyder has compiled not a harmony, but a synoptic view (cf. *Chronicles and Its Synoptic Parallels* [ed. J. C. Endres, W. R. Millar, and J. B. Burns; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998]). That is, there is no alteration to the chronological order. Each book is presented in its entirety and original sequence in the left-hand column. Related parallels are placed in the right-hand column where deemed most appropriate. Parallels are not included from Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or other biblical books.

Snyder's approach presents some significant advantages. Teachers or students going through any single book of Samuel, Kings, or Chronicles will easily find their passage in the original sequence in the primary column. In a harmony such as Newsome's, an index is essential for locating passages in Chronicles, which are often aligned following the order of Samuel-Kings. In addition, the entirety of these biblical books is included, so users will not be frustrated that a particular section of Chronicles is missing because of a lack of parallel in Samuel-Kings.

Conversely, the reader must recognize that this is not a harmony (despite the book's title), and none of the work in determining chronological order has been done. Because of the book's design, the reader will observe that all of the text of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles is printed twice (except 1 Chronicles 1–9). So, for example, one will find both the Kings and Chronicles accounts of Rehoboam's folly in the 1 Kings chapter (Section 64) and in the 2 Chronicles chapter (Section 176). Readers should note, however, that the placement of the two sources is reversed in the two sections, with the Kings account in the left column in the Kings chapter but the opposite in the Chronicles chapter. Those who are jumping back and forth between chapters may find this placement confusing, especially given the lack of Scripture references on each page.

Another questionable feature is the inclusion of lengthy "parallel texts" when there is no parallel. For example, 55 pages of 1 Samuel are included in the middle of the 1 Chronicles section, without a single parallel. Perhaps those pages could have been omitted and a note placed in the text referring the reader to the 1 Samuel section. It is true that the inclusion notifies the reader of a large portion of non-paralleled narrative, but the price of 55 pages is too high.

Snyder has chosen to use the updated NASB as his text without footnotes and with some alterations to the headings. This translation is certainly better than the Revised Version of 1884 used by Crockett, and some will prefer it to the RSV that is the basis for Newsome's harmony. Certainly the literal translation of the NASB makes the reader's work easier in comparing parallel texts, though Snyder does not make adjustments to the NASB where warranted by the Hebrew, as did Newsome. Readers could thus from time to time be led into thinking that the underlying Hebrew of parallel texts is different when in fact it is just a translation variation (e.g. 2 Sam 7:8 and 1 Chr 17:7).

A frustrating shortcoming of this work is the lack of section and Scripture reference headings on each page. It is not convenient to have to keep turning back to find out what book and chapter of the Bible one is reading. Serious users of this volume are going to want to handwrite the references on many pages. Vertical parallels or similar passages within the same book are included for one passage (2 Chr 9:25–28), but strangely the other parallel Chronicles text is lacking for 2 Chr 1:14–17.

The price (\$40 with no discounts online) seems high for a paperback book that is essentially a rearrangement of three biblical books. Many readers will still feel the need to keep Newsome at hand to see related parallels in the psalms and prophets. Perhaps the editor could add these passages in a second edition. The large format is convenient for desk usage and will stay open on a teaching podium, but it is less comfortable for holding in one's hands.

Readers who recognize the nature of this work and its particular purpose may find it quite useful. However, it does not fill the need for a careful harmony of the historical books in a modern translation.

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Esther. By Linda M. Day. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 2005, xi + 177 pp., \$24.00 paper.

This monograph by Linda Day continues the Abingdon OT Commentaries series and is as much as anything else a book about discrimination and its ambiguities. Day's *Esther* is a world divided against itself, where ambitious bigotry momentarily and menacingly intersects with the jaded callousness of royal apathy. Minority survival is for her a "primary issue" in *Esther* (p. 2). The book's characters must also make multiple and crucial decisions about their own self-identification, showing the work to be "relevant to the concerns of the homosexual community" (p. 3).

Day's work follows the series' four-part structure of (1) introduction; (2) literary analysis; (3) exegetical analysis; and (4) theological analysis. Series general editor Patrick Miller's disclaimer is that this last section is "not aimed primarily at contemporary issues of faith and life" (p. ix). Nevertheless, Day's section 4 often displays a penchant consistent with Athalya Brenner's sense that feminist biblical criticism has now moved beyond sex- and gender-specific matters to applications to contemporary life (see Brenner, *Ruth and Esther: A Feminist Companion to the Bible* [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–96] 14). Day repeatedly reaches out with ethical articulation that integrates textual event (e.g. Vashti's independence, Esther's "coming out") into contemporary social discussion (feminism, biracialism, gay and lesbian identity).

Day reads the book as humorous throughout despite its interest in such serious issues as genocide and arbitrary vengeance (on Haman's sons). Its sense is largely lost if readers miss how many elements are incongruous and even funny. Day may be aware of the absurd exaggerations of Ahasuerus's grand feasting, indecision, and looseness with his ring. But "funny" is probably not the most appropriate term. Klara Butting's "Esther: A New Interpretation of the Joseph Story in the Fight Against Anti-Semitism and Sexism" (in Brenner, *Ruth & Esther* 239–48) senses that the rule of Ahasuerus and his "wise men," frightened by strong-willed Vashti, is "not a natural order, but an order established again and again by force" (ibid. 242). The book of Esther thus features absurdities, but no jokes.

The book's concluding section (Esth 9:20–10:3) is sometimes considered extraneous because it clearly differs stylistically from what goes before. These differences Day explains as a change from fluid narration to "summarization" (p. 157), a new feature that begins at the start of Esther 9 (p. 143). Mordecai's initial establishment of Purim (Esth 9:20–23) is followed by a second admonition to observe the festival (Esth 9:25–28). The second, Day submits, is not merely repetitive, but rather offers, particularly in verse 25, a classic example of "framing"—selective reportage of facts previously

recounted, but now from a different perspective and for a distinct purpose. Day presents good logical and literary arguments for the pertinence and rhetorical force of the book's last and oft-disputed section on Purim. As a party, she notes, it constitutes a natural climax, the "party par excellence" that comes at the end and as the end, the tenth, of a series of fetes (p. 8) that unites the work, spanning from beginning to end.

On the presence and role of God, Day's reading is as uncertain as that of Michael Fox (see his *Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther* [Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1991] 244–47). But her notions of incongruity and her bold socio-political applications show her, in the end, to be more optimistic than Butting's Esther. Day may celebrate Esther's "complete" transformation from sexual to political queen (p. 162), but her feminist and liberating instincts seem not as keen as Butting when she experiences, in the book's conclusion, "a sense of satisfaction and completion" (p. 169). For Butting, Esther continues to be manacled [my term] at the very end. She remains a woman in a royal harem, ignored by the king's historiography. Esther 10:2 speaks of Mordecai's greatness and honors as recorded in the annals of the Medes and Persians, and 2 Macc 15:26 calls Purim the "Mordecai Feast." But whether or not Day's feminist visions are the grandest or most radical, the conscientious evenhandedness of her ethical readings and the boldness of her social commentary make for quite enough of a provocative reading.

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Preaching and Teaching the Psalms. By James L. Mays. Ed. Patrick D. Miller and Gene M. Tucker. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006, ix + 189 pp., \$19.95 paper.

This edition of important previously published essays and articles and unpublished congregational lectures and sermons represents much of James L. Mays's work on the Psalms written for a general audience. The editors have chosen eight significant essays published between 1990 and 2006 along with thirteen previously unpublished congregational lectures and sermons to draw a picture of Mays's contributions to the believing academy, pastors, and lay people.

The first section, "Studying the Psalms," contains six reprinted essays mainly from *Festschriften*, some of which are now out of print, along with a selection of previously unpublished congregational lectures on prayer-psalms. These essays assume a theologically informed audience, while many observations are more edifying in nature. Therefore one can not expect either a theological discussion or an exhortative sermon; the essays contain both these elements, though both on a rather superficial level. Most essays in this section depart from a theological theme and consider it throughout the psalms to rather different degrees. Hence, for example, while Mays's considerations on the structure of the psalms appear rather shallow, his reflections on the self in the psalms are more developed. Along this line, Mays's research of past theological literature and two brief bibliographies supplementing two essays have unfortunately not been updated by the editors, so that important publications and even revised editions of books mentioned that have been published after the first publication of the reprinted essay have not been incorporated. Nevertheless, Mays's outlook on prospective issues in the studies of the Psalms continues to be valuable even ten years after its first publication.

In the second section, "Interpreting the Psalms," the editors have included Mays's reflections on theological issues like Christian prayer, God's mercy, God's reign (Psalm 8; 22; 23; 51; 103; 133), Christ's advent (Psalm 24; 82; and 98), and their applications

to the believer. As these essays address a general audience in a congregation, their style is rather sermonic in nature. The limited space devoted to each psalm forbids a detailed exegesis or scholarly discussion. Instead, Mays includes personal experiences with the psalms and so challenges believers in their own Christian life. Hence, while the applications may appear pious, they often lack firm basis in the preached psalm. In some cases, one may even use other psalms and still apply the same message to the believer.

Seven devotions on selected psalms (Psalm 1; 9:19; 13; 51:13; 98; 100; 142) Mays apparently gave in different churches on the occasion of liturgical festivals (e.g. advent, lent) complete the book with the third section, entitled "Preaching the Psalms." Since these devotions are rather short (no sermon is longer than three pages), they can only reflect briefly on one or two issues and apply them to the audience.

The book is directed at a general Christian audience and useful for praying, preaching, and teaching selected psalms. While its title assumes an introduction or a guide for preaching and teaching the psalms, the reprinted essays give an overview of Mays's studies on some of the psalms, and the congregational lectures and sermons give examples of taught and preached psalms. Christian believers will discover the treated psalms afresh for their personal faith, pastors will pick up new ideas as they preach the psalms even in the liturgical year, and lecturers, who are also concerned about the spiritual formation of their students, will gather new suggestions as they preach, teach, and guide their students in using the psalms and applying them to their own lives.

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The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today. By Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, xviii + 334 pp., \$75.00.

The ancient Greek text known as the *Epistle of Aristeas to Philocrates* (hereafter *Ep. Arist.*) narrates a story told by Aristeas concerning the first Bible translation, which was made about three centuries before Christ when the Hebrew Pentateuch was translated into Greek. Wasserstein's book, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today*, traces the story Aristeas tells and the subsequent legends it inspired through the centuries, over a wide geographical range, and in three of the world's major religions—Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—as well as its use by a polytheist of fourth-century Egypt. Texts that include either major embellishments of the story of the origin of the Septuagint or only passing references to it are found "in the Iberian Peninsula and in Caucasian Iberia, on the shores of the Atlantic and in the wastes of Central Asia . . . not just in its original Greek but also in Latin and in Persian, in Armenian and in Ethiopic, in Hebrew and Arabic, and in Georgian, to say nothing of English and Portuguese and other languages of modern western Europe" over a span of more than seventeen centuries (p. 270). The scholarly interest that the *Ep. Arist.* has enjoyed since the sixteenth century continues even to this day.

Wasserstein's *The Legend of the Septuagint* is presented in ten chapters, an appendix, an extensive bibliography, and an index. It introduces the *Ep. Arist.* (chap. 1) and discusses the development of the legend of the origin of the Septuagint in its Hellenistic Jewish milieu (chap. 2) and in the later rabbinic materials (chaps. 3 and 4). Although the *Ep. Arist.* does not make the claim that the Septuagint was divinely inspired, the idea that each translator (or pair of translators) produced 72 (or 36) identical, divinely inspired translations appears in later writings. Wasserstein claims that the origin of this

element of divine inspiration, most frequently attributed to Philo, is a misreading of a statement that is about translation technique and not about divine origins (p. 45).

Wasserstein claims that additions to the Aristeas legend found in both the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds are the actual source of the idea of the divine inspiration of the Septuagint. He cites three Talmudic texts that include lists of biblical citations where the Greek translation allegedly differed from the Hebrew Torah (Baraita in tractate Megilla 9a-b in the Babylonian Talmud; tractate Megilla 71d in the Palestinian Talmud; and Mekhilta Bo 14; see p. 54). The function of these lists is to acknowledge with approval the changes the Greek translators made that, although resulting in a Greek text different from the Hebrew, nevertheless reflected accepted rabbinic interpretation of the Hebrew text. Wasserstein argues that such rabbinic approval would have been necessary only during the time the Jews wished to invest the Greek translation with an authority equal to that of the Hebrew. These lists of differences between the Hebrew Torah and its Greek translation clearly heighten the miraculous nature of the claim found in the rabbinic texts that though the translators worked independently they produced identical translations even where the Greek translation was different from the Hebrew (p. 52). Wasserstein argues that Rabban Gamaliel II (AD 80–117) was of the last generation of Palestinian rabbis who would have defended the authority of the Septuagint, and it is to him Wasserstein attributes the invention of the miraculous element of its production (pp. 68, 91, 95, 102). The miraculous element of the Septuagint's origin devised by the rabbi(s) then passes into Christian tradition and is first attested by Irenaeus in the late second century (p. 68). Thereafter the divine inspiration of the Septuagint became a doctrine of the Christian church until the Protestant Reformation, with a few earlier dissenters such as Jerome and Hugh of St. Victor.

Wasserstein's claim for the invention of the miraculous element of the story in rabbinic circles of first-century Palestine, though plausible, probably overreaches the textual evidence he offers, and his argument from circumstantial evidence could admit other conclusions. Wasserstein's theory is not compelling, but it is at the heart of his central theme that "the most powerful argument used by the Christian Church in favour of the inspiration of the Greek Bible is based on a story fashioned in the workshop of the rabbinic aggada" (p. xxii). The dating of the rabbinic material he relies upon is notoriously difficult, and he offers only circumstantial evidence for a first-century Palestinian provenance, noting that the Babylonian Talmud also preserves the earliest extant rabbinic form of the story (p. 67). Moreover, such lists of differences are found in several other rabbinic writings (pp. 69–83), and because no two lists are identical they were apparently produced and/or amended over time. To ground his theory Wasserstein seems to assume an "original" form of the lists extant in first-century Palestine without offering solid text-critical evidence. He rejects a Hellenistic-Jewish origin for the reason that the miraculous element is absent from Philo and Josephus, though that absence in Philo assumes that Wasserstein's own reading is correct against the many who have seen the implication of a miracle in Philo's words (pp. 67–68). He also rejects a Christian source for the idea of the miraculous origin of the Greek translation because "[i]t is virtually inconceivable that the Rabbis would have borrowed this story from their Christian rivals at any time" (p. 68). Wasserstein's opinion may be true, but it would be more compelling if he could demonstrate with historical evidence that the rabbis never borrowed ideas from Christian sources.

Although Wasserstein believes the Christian Fathers borrowed the miraculous element of the production of the Septuagint from the Palestinian rabbis, no trace of that material distinctive to the Talmudic material—a miracle attesting divine inspiration by citing identical *differences* between the Hebrew and Greek—is found in the stories preserved and propagated by Christian writers. This absence does not strengthen

Wasserstein's opinion about the direction of the borrowing. He suggests this absence is because such lists and the nature of the miracle they attest would not have been of great interest to those early Christians, the vast majority of whom could not read the Hebrew Bible. It was enough for them to assert that the translators produced identical copies of their work and to leave implicit the thought of agreement of the Greek copies even where the Greek and Hebrew differ.

In chapters 5 and 6 Wasserstein gathers and compares versions of the Septuagint legend as it is found in Christian writings in Greek and Latin from Justin Martyr of the second century through history to Remigius of St. Germain in the ninth century as well as among Christians in the Orient who wrote in Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, and Ethiopic. According to Wasserstein, the use of the legend of the Septuagint's origin by Christian writers was not simply to justify making the Septuagint a Christian book but to show that the Christian message it allegedly contained was available to others besides the Jews before the time of Christ. Furthermore, Christian use of the legend authenticated to those who could not read the Hebrew Scriptures that the prophecies of Christ had been in existence before the Christian church existed and, therefore, that the church had not invented them (p. 131).

Although the Muslims did not highly esteem the holy writings of either Judaism or Christianity, Wasserstein documents about a dozen Muslim texts that refer to the origin of the Septuagint from Islamic Spain to Afghanistan, dating from about the ninth century to the seventeenth (chap. 7). The writers of these texts were interested in the origin of the Septuagint primarily for its value in reconstructing the historical chronology of the pre-Muslim world. The characteristics of the legend of the Septuagint as found in Muslim texts indicates that the story entered the Muslim world through its contact with Christian sources in Arabic (p. 177).

Wasserstein masterfully chronicles the history of the legend of Septuagint origins, showing that all references and retellings of the story throughout the centuries trace back to material that originated in the *Ep. Arist.* and its embellishments in the first century by Philo, Josephus, and most importantly the rabbis of Palestine. The central thesis of Wasserstein's book is that the key argument of the Christian church for the inspiration of the Greek Bible was based on "a story fashioned in the workshop of rabbinic *aggada*" (p. xii). Christians who stand in the heritage of the Protestant Reformation will not be disturbed by Wasserstein's conclusion, because Protestant doctrine locates divine inspiration in the autographs of Scripture rather than in any translation of it. Engaging the works of the Catholic priests Pierre Benoit and Paul Auvray, *The Legend of the Septuagint* brings together in one place all primary sources—Jewish, Christian, and Muslim—throughout history that refer to the origin of the Septuagint. Completing a work begun by his late father, David Wasserstein has made a significant contribution to the study of the reception history of the Septuagint. This important volume deserves a place in every academic library.

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The Historical Jesus in Recent Research. Edited by James D. G. Dunn and Scot McKnight. SBTS 10. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2005, xvi + 618 pp., \$42.95.

The Historical Jesus in Recent Research is a compilation of selections from articles and books written by authors who have made "significant contributions to the quest"

for the historical Jesus. It is designed as “an introduction and way into the maze that is the ‘quest’” (p. xii). The book is divided into seven major sections: (1) Classic Voices; (2) Methodology; (3) Teachings of Jesus; (4) Jesus: Who Was He?; (5) Jesus: Major Events; (6) Jesus and Others; (7) Conclusion.

Part 1, “Classic Voices,” includes articles by Albert Schweitzer, Rudolf Bultmann, Henry Cadbury, and Martin Kähler. Few would quibble with the inclusion of Schweitzer and Bultmann in “Classic Voices,” but was Cadbury really more historically significant than, for example, Ernst Käsemann who initiated the New Quest?

James D. G. Dunn, one of the book’s editors, rightfully includes an excerpt from his own groundbreaking work in the section on “Methodology” (part 2). Few would disagree with the inclusion of Bultmann or John P. Meier in this section, but some might wonder whether Eugene Lemcio had actually made more significant contributions to methodology than, say, E. P. Sanders or N. T. Wright, who were omitted.

In part 3, “Teaching of Jesus,” Klyne Snodgrass was not one of the names that jumped immediately to mind when thinking of Jesus’ teachings, but his article was very good, nonetheless. The selections by G. B. Caird and Peter Stuhlmacher were particularly excellent in the section on “Jesus, Who Was He?” (part 4), but examples from Ben Witherington’s *Christology of Jesus* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990) and N. T. Wright’s *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) would have been good choices for this section also.

The juxtaposition of such significantly different views as those of P. M. Casey and Peter Stuhlmacher on the meaning of the phrase “Son of Man” left me thinking that other such combinations would have been very helpful as well, particularly on the resurrection of Jesus. Unfortunately, there were only two articles on the resurrection in the entire book—an excellent article by C. E. B. Cranfield and a much less convincing article by Gerd Luedemann. Both of these were included under “Jesus: Major Events” (part 5) along with articles on Jesus’ actions in the temple, his understanding of his own death, and his miracles. Surely Jesus’ miracles and resurrection are significant enough to warrant separate sections. For Jesus’ miracles, selections from John P. Meier’s *A Marginal Jew* (New York: Doubleday, 1991–2001) and from Graham Twelftree’s *Jesus the Miracle Worker* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999) would have been helpful. A selection from N. T. Wright’s monumental work on the resurrection (*The Resurrection of the Son of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003]) was conspicuous by its absence.

The “Conclusion” section did not really seem to conclude anything, nor did it seem to cohere very well as a chapter. It contained essays (1) by Bultmann on “The Message of Jesus and the Problem of Mythology”; (2) by G. N. Stanton on “The Gospel Traditions and Early Christological Reflection”; (3) by J. A. T. Robinson on “The Last Tabu? The Self-Consciousness of Jesus”; and (4) by Robert Morgan on “The Historical Jesus and the Theology of the New Testament.” Would not Robinson’s article on the self-consciousness of Jesus fit better in the section on “Jesus, Who Was He?” Would not Bultmann’s article on Jesus and mythology fit better under “Methodology”? Perhaps it would have been better to replace all the articles in the conclusion with concluding thoughts by the editors, James Dunn and Scot McKnight. The introductions to each section by the editors were helpful, however, and the book is well indexed with indices on authors, Scripture, and deuterocanonical literature and other ancient sources.

If a dozen Jesus scholars were asked to produce a book of excerpts from significant research on Jesus, it is unlikely that any two books would be identical. This review, therefore, is really just the reflection of what one reviewer might have done differently. The editors actually succeed very well in their task, which is to compile a selection of articles written by those who have made significant contributions to the quest for the historical Jesus. In spite of what might seem like a negative review, *The Historical*

Jesus in Recent Research is actually quite excellent and is highly recommended for libraries and graduate classes on Jesus.

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Jesus, the Tribulation, and the End of the Exile: Restoration Eschatology and the Origin of the Atonement. By Brant Pitre. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, xiii + 586 pp., \$49.99 paper.

This is an excellent, focused dissertation (University of Notre Dame) on the historical Jesus and Second Temple Judaism and on the limited question of the tribulation that brings the exile to an end so that the kingdom might begin. For both historical Jesus and tribulation concerns, Pitre positions this work in the wake of Albert Schweitzer (especially *The Mystery of the Kingdom of God* [New York: Macmillan, 1950]); Joachim Jeremias (*The Proclamation of Jesus* [New York: Scribner, 1971]); Ben Meyer (*The Aims of Jesus* [London: SCM, 1979]); Dale Allison (*The End of the Ages Has Come* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985]); N. T. Wright (*Jesus and the Victory of God* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996]); and C. Marvin Pate and myself (*Deliverance Now and Not Yet* [New York: Lang, 2003]). There is a good discussion and evaluation of the contributions that each of these volumes make to this particular question.

In the introduction and Second Temple material (reacting to Wright, pp. 31–34), Pitre makes a significant contribution, clarifying the regathering of the tribes of Israel after the captivity as not just Judah from Babylon but all the tribes from Assyria as well. The individuals in whose wake Pitre writes probably were not trying to exclude the Assyrian captivity when they refer to the captivity, but Pitre points out explicitly that, as captivity begins with Assyria, so kingdom recovers all tribes (pp. 35, 41–129). Pitre does not continue this point into the historical Jesus material; it is replaced by an occasional mention of the extension of the gospel to the Gentile nations. For example, in discussing Mark 13:9–13 Pitre states, “*the only way to bring about the End of the Exile, the ingathering of the lost tribes who had been scattered among the nations, is to go to the nations, and to bring back the Gentiles to Zion, along with the Israelites scattered among them*” (p. 263, italics his). Following Wright, as he does in this statement, actually tends to deemphasize Israel’s return from captivity in a futuristic manner to allow this hope to be supercessionally co-opted or dominated by the Gentile gospel program, which works counter to the stated thesis of the book.

Pitre is post-critical on much of the Second Temple material, but form-critical on *1 Enoch*, and historically critical on Daniel and the Gospel materials. I consider his post-critical approach toward most of the Second Temple material to be an advantage in capturing their respective contributions to his thesis. His dividing *1 Enoch* into separate form-driven segments (apocalypse, epistle, dreams, and similitudes) is not harmful since it does allow for genre-specific contributions to be provided, but it is a little odd to insert Daniel between his *1 Enoch* discussions on epistle and dreams, possibly implying a confidence to discern a sequence of development. He keeps all other documents together as intact. He identifies Daniel as a pseudepigraphon and dates its composition during 167–63 BC. He cites Pate and Kennard as his first source on this point (but our view is closer to the conservative stance in our note, while acknowledging this critical position is celebrated [*Deliverance*, pp. 39, 64 n. 33]). His remaining sources for this point support his view. Pitre (p. 465, text for n. 228) also wrongly claims that Pate and Kennard hold the view that the tribulation is a forty-year period, as we identify

that this is the view of *CD* in the discussions by Wise and Douglas (*Deliverance*, pp. 82–83). Pitre (p. 126) challenges Pate and Kennard's reading of *1 Enoch* 62:14–16 as a mystical vicarious atonement by marshalling what we acknowledge to be a strong case for mimetic atonement in *1 Enoch* broadly. Our point is that both forms of atonement are present in *1 Enoch*, and Pitre is unconvinced of this. Pitre accurately summarizes his Second Temple conclusions (pp. 128–29). However, it would be helpful if his notational support was more specific in listing verses. While I agree with all his points in this summary, I think only about half of his stated support backs up his points (e.g. for p. 128, n. 263 I would list *1 Enoch* 93:8; Dan 9:7; *Jub.* 1:22–25; *Ps. Sol.* 17:16–18; *T. Moses* 3:8–9).

Pitre's approach to the historical Jesus follows John Meier's criteria: (1) multiple attestation; (2) coherence; (3) embarrassment; and (4) discontinuity (pp. 26–29). He diminishes discontinuity to only discontinuity with the early church rather than also with Judaism (double dissimilarity). He also diminishes "coherence" to a second-tier criterion of plausibility (close to Dale Allison's category of "historicity"). Pitre adds a fifth criterion of "historical congruence," which I think has added back into his criteria what he had excised from Meier's understanding of "coherence." I am in substantial agreement with Meier's criteria, so I see Pitre as an ally in historical Jesus studies. The main body of his work is a study of Gospel texts analyzed consistently through this methodology, affirming that all the biblical claims contain legitimate historical Jesus statements. He might be momentarily inconsistent in his handling of the criteria in the last paragraph on p. 154 when compared to the first full paragraph of p. 155, but he still affirms the historicity of the biblical claims. Pitre's excellent analysis shows why he affirms the biblical text as from Jesus, often answering other critics.

Pitre positions his view within a covenantal nomism from Deuteronomy, the prophets, and Second Temple sources, and he follows Dunn (on Matt 11:13/Luke 16:16) in affirming that the Law does not cease with John the Baptist (p. 171). Such a view helps to provide conceptual roots for the meaning of the tribulation as covenant curse (which is a focus of the book) and the kingdom as covenant blessing (which is underdeveloped because it is beyond the focus of the book). I say "underdeveloped" because many of the tribulation passages contextually lead into kingdom passages, and if he had developed this kingdom emphasis more, I think that it would support his thesis about the kingdom being the end of the exile.

He seems to appreciate a preterism similar to Wright's, without interacting with how the dominant Gentile mission shifts from the neglect of Jews (by the second century AD) to Christian anti-semitism (by the seventh century AD). However, his presentation of the OT and Second Temple sources identify the hope of a regathering of all Israel that extends beyond his development from the Gospels. I think that the Gospels affirm this all-Israel hope for the kingdom more than Pitre has developed. Additionally, on page 406, Pitre's point could be strengthened with regard to the Gospels' concept of "redemption" including "deliverance or release *from exile*" by comparing Mark 10:45 (and parallels) to the Lukan concept of "redemption" including Jesus' messianic Davidic reign of covenant blessing (see Luke 1:68 and 21:28 in their contexts).

In spite of Pitre's recognition that the OT, Second Temple, and Gospels sources have substantial tribulation on the righteous (mimetic atonement of John the Baptist and disciples, p. 381) and that both Daniel and Jesus linked the onset of the tribulation with the destruction of the temple (pp. 55, 381), he follows Schweitzer in developing a messianic role for Jesus to perform a vicarious atonement to begin the tribulation with his death (pp. 382–507). He takes Mark 10:35–45 (and parallels), "ransom for many," as referring to Jesus' death in a vicarious atonement, which is quite common in evangelicalism. Pitre states, "Indeed, perhaps the most significant conclusion of this chapter, and indeed of this study as a whole, could be summed up as follows: *Jesus, speaking of himself as both Son of Man and Messiah, deliberately took the sufferings*

of the tribulation upon himself in order to atone the sins of Israel, sins which had led them into exile. Because he saw this tribulation as nothing less than an eschatological Passover, he sought to inaugurate it in both word and deed, thereby, to bring about the End of the Exile and the restoration of the twelve tribes in a New Exodus" (pp. 505–6, italics his). There is no discussion of the concept of mimetic atonement dominant in the Mark 10:38–39, 44 context or his Catholic context, and no interaction with Pate and Kennard on this point.

Overall, Pitre has provided a significant work that is a satisfying read for the scholar of the historical Jesus or eschatology.

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Studies in Matthew: Interpretation Past and Present. By Dale C. Allison, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, 282 pp., \$34.99.

Having spent the last few years studying the Gospel of Matthew, I have repeatedly found the writings of Dale Allison to be some of the most stimulating, fair-minded, and insightful works available. There is still no better commentary on Matthew than the three volumes he coauthored with W. D. Davies (most of which were written by Allison, as the preface to the third volume shows). He also has produced several monographs and articles, many of which I have read with great benefit. His scholarship is marked by lucidity, erudition, and a refreshing even-handedness. The present volume is no exception.

After a brief preface, this book consists of two parts containing a total of thirteen essays. Part 1 is entitled "The Exegetical Past," and part 2 "Literary and Historical Studies." Woven throughout all of the essays is a sensitive appreciation of the comments and insights of the history of interpretation and especially the Church fathers. As Allison explains, the last two decades of his own research have increasingly shown him "how profoundly the exegetical present is indebted to the exegetical past" (p. 9) and how unfortunate it is that the modern scholarly guild rarely reads any commentators earlier than those of the twentieth century.

While all of the chapters reflect Allison's interest and skill in the history of interpretation, the six essays of part 1 focus especially on reading particular Matthean texts in light of patristic commentary. With deftness and clarity Allison walks through Matt 2:2, 9–10; 5:8; 5:21–25; 27:45; and 28:9, showing how the Church fathers pondered and wrestled with the meaning of these texts, while also revealing interpretations and insights that have often been lost in modern scholarship. For example, on the phrase "they will see God" (Matt 5:8) Allison surveys a variety of exegetical options from the first several centuries, including the debate about whether this referred in some sense to a corporeal God, to Jesus' parousia, to a mystical encounter with God, or as simply a metaphor for insight. These and other interpretations are rarely if ever mentioned in modern commentaries, but they are often profoundly argued and theologically ripe. Other essays offer similar insights on the manner in which Matt 5:21–24 reflects Gen 4:1–16, the variety of theological interpretations of the darkness at Jesus' death (Matt 27:45), and the apologetic function of Matt 28:9, where the disciples touch Jesus' feet. On this last point Allison offers a fascinating discussion of how this verse has been interpreted, including how the widespread belief (ancient and modern) about the feetlessness of ghosts contributes to its apologetic role. Such intriguing and carefully argued tidbits are found in every essay.

In these essays, Allison not only surveys the early history of interpretation but also takes occasional side trips into hermeneutics, including the role that the history of interpretation should take in our exegesis. Allison also takes the opportunity to discuss the exegetical realities of intertextuality (other texts alluded to in Matthew) and intratextuality (Matthew's internal allusive cross-referencing). These important concepts are treated well by Allison (here and in some of his other works such as *The Intertextual Jesus* [Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2000]) and will reappear in the latter half of the book as important tools to discerning Matthew's meaning.

Part 1 concludes with a summary essay entitled "Reading Matthew through the Church Fathers." Here Allison offers a brief case for why it is beneficial and important that we listen to the Fathers when reading our Bibles. Their historical closeness and Bible-saturatedness help us see cultural and intertextual insights that we would otherwise miss. In addition, their theological acumen often sheds light on our lack thereof, and simply they often say things very well. Allison is not arguing for a repristination of the Fathers' interpretations *in toto*—they have their own blindspots—but he is wisely calling us to learn humbly from those who have gone before us.

Part 2 ("Literary and Historical Studies") contains another fascinating and varied set of essays. Chapter 7 makes a brief but thoughtful analysis of the overall structure of Matthew and from this proceeds to discuss the biographical function of the First Gospel. Especially helpful here is Allison's discussion of the moral aims of biography and how, like other ancient literature, the Gospels present Jesus not only as the Messiah to be honored but also as the one whom we are to imitate, the great exemplar of the faith. Chapter 10, "The Configuration of the Sermon on the Mount and Its Meaning," is the longest in the book (43 pages). Building on the position of W. D. Davies and that found in the Davies and Allison commentary, Allison here argues for the essentially triadic literary structure of the Sermon and how this likely reflects first-century Judaism and the "three pillars" of Torah, temple, and deeds of lovingkindness. Other essays in this section deal with literary questions in Matthew, such as how to reconcile seeming contradictions within the teachings of the Gospel; how the passion narrative is repeatedly foreshadowed and alluded to throughout Matthew; how Matthew's famous "exception clause" (Matt 5:32; 19:9) relates to Joseph's desire to divorce Mary and what it means to be a "eunuch for the kingdom" (19:12); and how the opening words of Matthew (βίβλος γενέσεως) function in a multivalent literary and theological way. The final essay, which I did not find quite as engaging as the previous ones, discusses how the episode of the slaughtered infants in Matthew 2 interfaces with the perennial question of the problem of evil and Greco-Roman and Jewish attempts at theodicy.

The variety of laudatory adjectives I have already employed in this review undoubtedly reveals that I thoroughly enjoyed this book and benefited greatly from it. It is so chock full of insights that one can rarely make it through a page without having to stop and jot down quotes and spin-off thoughts. I believe it was Oliver Wendell Holmes who observed that on this side of complexity is "simplistic," while on the other side of complexity is "simple." The latter is true of Allison's writing. He has such a masterful grasp of the secondary literature, and more importantly, the text of Matthew, that his conclusions are never simplistic. Instead, when explaining complex and profound insights, he writes with a lucidity that comes only from having worked through the complexities to the point of simple and convincing elucidation.

Beyond gaining insight into particular passages in Matthew, readers of this book will also learn much about how to read well, particularly as it relates to the reality of intertextuality and intratextuality. Many evangelicals will be uncomfortable with some of the hermeneutical comments made regarding the multiple meanings of texts, but there is much to be learned from Allison's rather tame views in this regard. Evangelical readers may also be uncomfortable with occasional statements that imply less than a

direct correspondence between Matthew's text and historical fact (e.g. pp. 36, 88–105), though these references are mild and infrequent. We can all especially profit from Allison's model of learning to read Scripture with the Church fathers. This growing trend among students of the Bible is an important corrective to the stifling hegemony and "chronological snobbery" of many forms of historical criticism. It is not insignificant that the two leading Matthean scholars (Allison and Ulrich Luz) both have published a book in the last year (with the same title!) that comes from within historical criticism but emphasizes the importance of the patristic contribution to studying the Gospels (cf. Luz, *Studies in Matthew* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], especially "The Significance of the Church Fathers for Biblical Interpretation in Western Protestant Perspective"). Overall, this is a volume to be read and owned. I plan not only to read it again but also to use it as a supplemental textbook in more than one class.

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The Gospel according to Saint John. By Andrew T. Lincoln. BNTC. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2005, ix + 584 pp., \$29.95.

"Of the writing of commentaries on the Gospel of John there is no end," one might say when confronted with this latest addition to the Black's New Testament Commentary series by Andrew T. Lincoln, Portland Professor of New Testament at the University of Gloucestershire. With the confluence of such helpful commentaries published in the last fifteen years by D. A. Carson, C. S. Keener, A. J. Köstenberger, L. Morris, H. Ridderbos, and R. A. Whitacre—not to mention some other commentaries that remain widely used and insightful even after being with us for thirty years or so, such as those by R. E. Brown and R. Schnackenburg—one may wonder "Why yet another?" The question before us is this: what new ground does Lincoln cover that makes his commentary a necessary and helpful resource for the pastor's or scholar's library given the plethora of commentaries on John's Gospel available today? This book review will make three observations about the commentary by Lincoln in an attempt to answer this question.

The first observation is that this commentary does indeed break with many of the more recent commentaries in that it revisits the issue of the relationship between the Synoptics and the Gospel of John by making the argument that the writer of John knew the Synoptic tradition and utilized that tradition in the writing of his own story of Jesus. Many recent commentaries have adopted the thesis made popular by C. H. Dodd that the writer of John's Gospel did not know the Synoptics, but rather both the writer of John's Gospel and the Synoptic tradition utilized a common oral tradition. This explains, Dodd argued, how there can be points of similarity between John and the Synoptics but yet no direct literary dependence. Lincoln diverges from most contemporary Johannine scholarship on this point by arguing that the writer of John's Gospel knew Matthew, Mark, and Luke and intentionally altered them to emphasize the theological perspective of the Johannine community. In fact, Lincoln argues that the writer of John's Gospel exercised a great deal of "creative and imaginative freedom" (p. 38) in his use of the Synoptics to refocus them in a Christological direction, a perspective that will be disturbing to most evangelicals, as our subsequent analysis will demonstrate. For the sake of space, I will point out only two examples. First, Lincoln sees behind the high priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 a creative reworking of the Lord's Prayer (Matt 6:9–15; Luke 11:1–4). The writer of John's Gospel begins with the Lord's Prayer as a base, creates an extended prayer, and then places that prayer on the lips of Jesus in such a way that the high Christology of the Johannine community is emphasized. Second,

Lincoln sees in the story of the healing of the paralytic in John 5:1–15 and the subsequent discourse on the Father's testimony about the Son a reworking of a cluster of Markan miracle stories from Mark 2:1 to 3:6 that highlight Jesus' controversies with the Pharisees. In Lincoln's view, the writer of John's Gospel conflates these miracle stories into one healing that takes place on the Sabbath, drops Mark's emphasis on the differences between Jesus' and the Pharisees' approach to the Law, and creatively develops a speech placed on the lips of Jesus that emphasizes the relationship between the Father and the Son.

Most evangelicals will be uncomfortable with Lincoln's analysis of those texts in John where he sees dependence on the Synoptics—like Lincoln's analysis of John 5 and 17 mentioned above—because the end result is that the historicity of this material is treated as suspect. Subsequently, Lincoln argues that what is important is not historical reliability but whether or not the Gospel of John reliably draws out “the significance of the life which it narrates” (p. 48). A further demonstration of Lincoln's tendency on the one hand to minimize the historical reliability of portions of the Gospel of John but on the other hand to retain the view that they contain some “significance” is his analysis of John 3 and 4. In Lincoln's analysis of Jesus' conversations with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman at the well, he makes this observation relative to their historicity: “it is unlikely that the content of the conversations with Nicodemus [*sic*] and the Samaritan woman have any claim to be reliable historical tradition” (p. 40). Lincoln goes on in the commentary to make this interesting follow-up observation on the Nicodemus passage: “The inconclusiveness of the historicity discussion should also serve as a reminder that, for the evangelist, the material we have been considering is not of interest in its own right but only as it serves as a platform on which John can provide his final testimony” (p. 167).

The second observation about this commentary is actually an extension of the first observation relative to how Lincoln approaches the historicity of the Gospel of John. It is clearly stated in Lincoln's commentary that he is favorable toward and has adopted J. L. Martyn's two-level approach to reading the Gospel of John, whereby the issues facing the Johannine community as they are in conflict with their opponents are collapsed into the issues that Jesus originally faced in his conflicts with the religious leaders of his day. Thus, what we often have in John's Gospel is an anachronistic reading of the ministry of Jesus through the lens of the Johannine community's faith experience in and around AD 90. Lincoln states it this way: “Frequently the moulding of the story of Jesus by the concerns of a later perspective is such that the two are collapsed together and Jesus, in the setting of his mission and in debate with his opponents, expresses the convictions of the evangelist and his community in their debates with opponents” (p. 47). The classic reading of this approach in Johannine literature is the reference in John 9 to the blind man who was healed by Jesus and subsequently cast out of the synagogue because of his new allegiance to Jesus. Lincoln follows the typical two-level interpretation of this passage by stating that the casting out of the healed man in John 9:22 is historically dubious. He argues that it is a created story meant to represent those in the Johannine community who had been cast out of the synagogue due to the adoption of the twelfth of the eighteen Synagogue Benedictions established around AD 85. What is unfortunate about this aspect of the commentary is that Lincoln does not interact with the recent scholarship that is quite critical of this two-level reading of John 9. For example, while Lincoln lists C. L. Blomberg's book *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* as a conservative approach to issues of historicity in the “For Further Reading” section of the introduction to his commentary, he does not give any indication in his actual treatment of John 9 that he has interacted with it.

The third and last observation is a critique of the format of the commentary. With the exception of text-critical and translation notes that follow the actual biblical text, there are no footnotes or parenthetical notes in this commentary. This makes it

extremely difficult for the careful reader to discern the sources with which Lincoln is interacting as he comments on the biblical text.

By way of summary, while Lincoln is representative of a different direction in terms of the relationship between John and the Synoptics, much of the commentary is a recapitulation of moderate to liberal approaches to the Gospel of John. In addition, the format of the commentary does not aid the serious reader. For purchasers of commentaries on the Gospel of John, it is still my opinion that if they have the ones written by D. A. Carson, A. J. Köstenberger, and H. Ridderbos they would be very well served.

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Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship. By Rekha M. Chennattu. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2006, xxiv + 256 pp., \$29.95 paper.

The back-of-the-book blurb for Rekha Chennattu's *Johannine Discipleship as a Covenant Relationship* may describe it as a "masterful fusion of the historical-critical method and narrative criticism," but in truth the book is simply a detailed reading and exegesis of selective parts of the Fourth Gospel with limited critical engagement. Chennattu, perhaps the first Catholic woman from India to be awarded a doctorate in Scripture, produced her intricate reading of the Johannine discipleship/covenant motifs during her Ph.D. studies at the Catholic University of America under Francis J. Moloney.

According to Chennattu, the book has three aims: "(1) it provides a detailed exegetical analysis of the discipleship narratives and discourses in John 1, 13–17, and 20–21; (2) it investigates the OT motifs behind the presentation of discipleship and defines Johannine discipleship as a covenant relationship; (3) it examines the function and relevance of the discipleship paradigm for the Johannine community" (p. xv). As we will see, the work succeeds admirably in the first goal but falls short of fully accomplishing the latter two goals.

Johannine Discipleship opens with a chapter introducing the late twentieth-century history of the interpretation of discipleship in the Fourth Gospel and with an analysis of the discipleship motif in John 1:35–51. Her first reading stop is the call of the early disciples, from which she develops her perception of the Johannine discipleship motif. Chennattu focuses on John 1 (and later 13–17 and 20–21) as the keys to unlocking the discipleship motif because they are the only discourses where the Johannine Jesus is alone with his disciples (p. 137; cf. p. 25). While it is possible to fault her for foregoing, say, the Samaritan woman in John 4, we may accept her rationale as a necessary evil of a book's scope. More troubling is her too-neat historical compartmentalizing, arguing "the disciples in the Johannine narrative cannot be understood as historical persons whom the reader can recapture from the text" (p. 18). Would this include Peter (positivistically uncaptureable but surely a historical person)?

Chapter 2 examines the covenant motif in the OT and seeks to place the farewell discourse "within the broad OT theme of the covenant motif" (p. 88). The discussion of the OT covenant motif is very limited. While Chennattu admits there is great diversity in theories concerning ancient near Eastern covenants (p. 52), she does little to explain or defend why the theory she chose (largely from the work of E. W. Nicholson) is more valid than other theories. Readers may struggle with some of her ideas, such as her belief that "covenant in the OT is a metaphor borrowed from the sociopolitical realm" (p. 65) and therefore "is not a treaty in terms of a binding contract but a biblical metaphor

that expresses a kinship relationship. . . . [T]he essence of the covenant relationship with God is therefore friendship and fidelity" (p. 56). Within the OT, Chennattu points primarily to Exodus 19–24 and Joshua 24 to draw parallels with John 13–17 "in an attempt to bring to light that the Johannine presentation of discipleship is a Christian rereading of the OT metaphor of covenant" (p. 88).

The third chapter consists of a detailed reading of OT covenant and Johannine discipleship motifs in the farewell discourse and in many ways is the heart of the book. Here Chennattu pulls together the various features of OT covenants (such as communal meals, calls to abide, and prayers of consecration) and considers their Johannine parallels. She builds a strong exegetical case that the Fourth Evangelist "presents discipleship, from the very beginning, in terms of an everlasting covenant relationship with God" (p. 113). Chennattu's unique reading again leads to ideas that may puzzle some readers; for example, she argues that, since the "world" does not "know" the Father (John 15:21; cf. Isa 1:3), "the failure of knowledge leads one to sin, and it is the rationale for the rejection and crucifixion of Jesus" (p. 121). The depiction of the Sanhedrin (and Judas) would suggest otherwise (John 11:47–53; cf. 13:27).

Chapter 4 considers the discipleship motif in John 20–21 within an OT covenant context and is largely successful as with Chennattu's previous readings. In doing so, she joins the growing chorus of scholars viewing John 21 as an "integral part" of the Fourth Gospel (p. 140). Especially compelling is her too-brief development of the OT covenantal formula in John 20:17–18. Once more, several puzzling ideas appear: a blessing is in essence a covenant (p. 168), the untorn net in John 21:6–11 symbolizes a covenant community (p. 172), and the descent of Moses with the Law is akin to Jesus bringing "the gift of the Holy Spirit down to the disciples" (p. 177).

The final chapter diverges from the rest of the work by investigating "the question of the *Sitz im Leben der Kirche* that led a Christian community to articulate its understanding of Christian discipleship in terms that reflect the OT covenant motif" (p. 180). The author examines OT covenant motifs in related ancient near Eastern texts in light of sociological theories and builds the case that the Johannine community was a deviant group emerging from Judaism using a covenant-discipleship paradigm to define its identity ("deviant group" in the sociological sense).

As a whole, *Johannine Discipleship* interacts with extensive latitude in modern Johannine studies but remains shallow in its critical engagements. Chennattu makes numerous debatable assertions with little or no discussion or defense. The two greatest drawbacks involve the development of the book. First, the book bills itself as narrative-critical when it is not. It is plainly a textual and exegetical reading with an occasional reference to literary devices. This problem is not limited to Chennattu but is endemic throughout biblical studies. Second, the book's organization is at times perplexing. For example, the author completes her analysis of the covenant-discipleship paradigm for John 1 in chapter 1 only to introduce in chapter 2 the OT covenant motif. The brief final chapter seems like a spare seminar paper that perhaps would have been better suited as the kernel of Chennattu's next book.

There are quite a number of strengths to Chennattu's analysis: it avoids dependence on easily manipulated rhetorical devices such as parallelism and instead relies on solid exegesis; it focuses on conspicuous OT/NT themes rather than obscure word searches (p. 69); and it recognizes some of its own weaknesses. In the end, *Johannine Discipleship's* meaningful contribution to biblical studies is its ability to bind NT discipleship to its OT roots. The book will be very useful to scholars, pastors, or educated readers seeking the heart of NT discipleship.

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Acts. By Jaroslav Pelikan. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005, 320 pp., \$29.99.

In the past two decades, the genre of the “Bible commentary” has become increasingly pliable, with commentators negotiating the plethora of presumably relevant interpretive data in the service of diverse approaches to assisting readers in their understanding of a particular book’s message. The approach taken here is self-avowedly theological. Pelikan’s is the first in a new commentary series “born out of the conviction that dogma clarifies rather than obscures.” According to the series editor, R. R. Reno, who has provided for this volume a six-page preface, “Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible advances upon the assumption that the Nicene tradition, in all its diversity and controversy, provides the proper basis for the interpretation of the Bible as Christian Scripture” (pp. 13–14). Set within the landscape of over 100 years of scholarly commentary writing motivated by all sorts of considerations—e.g. philological, grammatical, source-critical, historical, social-scientific, and literary, but only rarely *theological* and *ecclesial*—this is a remarkable claim for what may well become a remarkable series. As a “commentary on the Bible,” however, this inaugural volume is disappointing precisely for perpetuating the very dichotomy the series seems to have been designed to overcome.

If, whatever else it might do, a commentary purposes to provide information, organized schematically in relation to the structure of the book, presumed to be relevant for grappling with the book’s message, then it is unclear that Pelikan has actually given us a commentary. This is not because of its theological and doctrinal interests, which are much to be welcomed. Also, it is not because Pelikan has had to be selective in what issues or texts to address in detail; this problem faces all commentators. It is, rather, that the majority of the theological and/or doctrinal issues he addresses are only loosely associated with the Lukan narrative—which, then, is often little more than a jumping-off point for Pelikan to address theological topics.

As one might expect in a commentary, Pelikan moves through Acts chapter-by-chapter. Sprinkled here and there throughout the volume are insights into the narrative of Acts that come only through genuine intimacy with the text. Pelikan has a keen sense especially of thematic development within the Lukan narrative, but he gives us far too little access to this kind of wisdom. Instead, the real substance of the book resides in the 84 “theological topics” (“τόποι or *loci communes*”), arranged three per chapter of Acts in a fashion that Pelikan admits may seem “higgledy-piggledy,” through which we are introduced to “most of the content of Christian theology” (p. 30). Acts 1, for example, provides him with opportunity to discuss “the gospel of the forty days,” ascension and second coming, and Mary the Mother of God (“Theotokos”). Acts 5, on the other hand, is the occasion for comments on the deity of the Holy Spirit, the Twelve and the primacy of Peter, and the sovereignty that trumps any human authority. These brief essays are for the most part astonishingly unrelated to the book of Acts. In spite of its title, the essay on “Ascension and Second Coming” provides no theological reflection on the ascension itself, no engagement with the contemporary theological problem of the ascension, and no discussion of how the ascension functions within the Lukan narrative. Pelikan’s discussion of Mary follows traditional lines but accounts neither for Luke’s particular contribution to Mariology nor for recent attempts among Protestants to re-appropriate Mary; neither do we hear how Christian reflection on the significance of Mary might help us to read Acts. With regard to his discussion of human authority, Pelikan urges that “the subordination of all human authority in [Acts 5:29] was not to be taken to apply to Holy Church as administered by human beings any more than it did to Holy Scripture as written by human beings, but only to ‘purely human’ authorities” (pp. 89–90)—a claim that is hard to square with the history of an all-too-human church.

With respect to chapter 1, given the “theological topics” Pelikan has chosen, it is fascinating that the seminal missiological passage in the Lukan narrative, Acts 1:8, receives no attention; similarly, issues around leadership and decision-making raised by Acts 1:15–26 are bypassed without comment.

To illustrate further, Acts 2 provides the occasion for theological discussion of the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of Christ, and the classic definition of the church as “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.” Taking up the historical-theological problem of the procession of the Spirit, Pelikan draws extensively on the Gospel of John but offers little about how the church’s discussion of this issue might help us to read Acts; neither do we have the benefit of Pelikan’s views regarding what contribution Acts might have made (or might still make) to the issue. We find no theological engagement with contemporary pneumatology, and no discussion of the diverse readings of the pentecostal gift of the Spirit championed in the past century. Moreover, Luke’s presentation of “apostolic fellowship” (κοινωνία) is parsed in terms of polity (especially with reference to 1 Timothy), omitting any reference to economics.

One of the questions that must be addressed in a work of this sort seems not to have created much *Angst* for Pelikan—namely, “What is the role of hard-nosed exegesis in theological interpretation?” Wrapped up with this question, of course, is how historical and/or ecclesial interests relate to the work of biblical scholarship. Sharply put, have the last three centuries of biblical scholarship anything of substance to offer theological interpretation? To cite only one, glaring example, this question surfaces at the most basic level of what constitutes the book of Acts, of what text we will read. Pelikan works with Marie-Émile Boismard’s reconstruction of what Pelikan refers to as a “text accepted by church fathers” (*textus a patribus receptus*, or “TPR”), in spite of the almost universal decision among NT scholars against its originality.

The approach Pelikan has taken is explained in part, first, by recognition of his status as a historian, not a biblical scholar or theologian; and, second, by his home in the Orthodox Church. With regard to the first, Pelikan displays a notable, even enviable, intimacy with the early tradition. With regard to the latter, we may applaud an approach to commentary that allows one to inhabit an ecclesial tradition, rather than to transcend it, even if the result is that some issues of concern to the wider church as well as to NT scholarship (e.g. the role of women in the church’s ministry or infant baptism) are, for him, simply non-issues.

I, for one, celebrate the rehabilitation of the creed in biblical interpretation and particularly its role as “ruling” Christian interpretation of Scripture. In modern times, the creed has not been allowed this function, its marginalization in biblical studies having opened the door to a host of other interests and assumptions. With this volume, we have not so much recovered the creed for its function of “ruling” Christian interpretation of Scripture as allowed the creed to “overrule” Scripture in the sense that Acts is made host to controversies and concerns about which it has nothing to say. (Should we anticipate that a single biblical book might address the whole spectrum of theological loci?) Even allowing for a generous elasticity in one’s definition, a biblical commentary should still comment on the biblical text. We can celebrate the publication of this volume for its remarkable mélange of short, historical-theological essays on topics as wide-ranging as “incarnation and theosis,” “ascetic discipline and self-denial,” “humor that is not unseemly,” and “negation as the affirmation of metaphysical transcendence.” However, we must look elsewhere for help in a theological reading of Acts.

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The Crux of Election: Paul's Critique of the Jewish Confidence in the Election of Israel. By Sigurd Grindheim. WUNT 2/202. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005. xi + 282 pp., \$69.00 paper.

The Crux of Election represents the revised and expanded version of Sigurd Grindheim's Ph.D. dissertation (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2002; advisor D. A. Carson). The book is a helpful contribution to the ongoing interaction of NT scholars with E. P. Sanders's *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977) and with the new perspective on Paul (NP) and joins a chorus of evangelical critics of the same. According to the author, when one compares Paul's view of Jewish election with Jewish views, the discontinuity must loom larger than Sanders's "similar patterns of religion" would suggest.

Although interaction with the NP appears to form the impetus for the study and results in a brief concluding chapter on implications, the bulk of the book carefully examines selected aspects of Jewish and Pauline understanding of election rather than conducting a polemical argument with the NP. For Paul, election is expressed as conformity to the cross of Christ. God's elect are now characterized by weakness and by a reversal of values in which they do not appear outwardly to possess the visible markers of divine favor. Jewish confidence in election, on the other hand, is "directed towards a visible religious status, rather than toward Christ and his cross" (p. 200). Paul's view amplifies the view of election already present in the OT, while the Jewish view represents a departure witnessed in writings of the Second Temple period.

The study makes no claims to methodological advance but utilizes standard exegetical and historical tools with limited reference to socio-rhetorical approaches. The bulk of the book's argument is laid out simply and is almost entirely free of editorial errors. Interaction with recent scholarship is found largely in the footnotes and is generally thorough. As with most contributions to the WUNT series, the book will be of interest mainly to scholars and serious students of the NT.

Chapter 1 reviews briefly "Election in the Scriptures of Israel." Attention is drawn to a unified (canonical) concept of election. The elements chosen for focus are of obvious value as precursors to Paul's own thought—reversal of values (Deuteronomy 7), remnant, etc.—and lead nicely into the suggestion that Paul's view is a faithful continuation of the OT perspective. No attempt is made to trace diachronic development or diversity. Numerous other central elements of the OT election tradition, which would fit less easily into Grindheim's thesis, are not analyzed (e.g. circumcision and adherence to Torah). A study, for instance, of the OT's language of "worthy" behavior by the elect might suggest that Paul (cf. 1 Thess 2:12; Phil 1:27; Eph 4:1 ["worthy of the calling"]; Col 1:10; 2 Thess 1:5, 11) and Judaism were not quite so different as Grindheim theorizes.

Chapter 2 treats "Election in Second Temple Judaism" by examining selected writings of the OT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, Qumran literature, and Philo. Unlike the OT, a diversity of views is expected in this body of literature (against Sanders's supposed common pattern of religion). Election is increasingly associated with wisdom/Torah, with the result that "the elect can be characterized by their obedience to the law" and "righteousness is understood as the logical cause of election" rather than grace alone (p. 75). While the gracious election of Israel as a whole is generally unquestioned, a tension develops where the elect are marked by adherence to the sect's particular Torah obedience or by acceptance of divine discipline upon sinful Israel. Thus, election is increasingly "related to one's visible religious status" and represents a departure from Israel's Scripture and a contrast to Paul's view. It will be this Second Temple view of election that Paul critiques. Grindheim's views in this chapter echo those of his doctoral advisor (cf. D. A. Carson, *Divine Sovereignty and Human Responsibility* [Atlanta: John Knox, 1981]). He applauds Sanders for overturning a caricature of legalistic Judaism,

but his consistent resurrection of self-righteous Judaism will be viewed by most as a return to the same. Even in Rabbinic Judaism “the great majority of the Rabbis . . . attribute the election to a mere act of grace (or love) on the part of God” (S. Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* [2d ed.; New York: Schocken, 1961] 61).

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 constitute the heart of the book, focusing on passages in the undisputed Paulines. Relevant critical issues are treated as necessary (e.g. theories as to literary integrity and opponents) but do not interfere with the main focus on detailed exegesis of the passages themselves. Rather than novel interpretations, these chapters provide convincing evidence for the centrality of cruciformity in Paul’s soteriology (see also M. Gorman, *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001]). In 2 Cor 11:16–12:10 (chap. 3) Paul opposes Jewish-Christian false apostles who put confidence in their election via visible markers of blessing and power. Their “boasting in the flesh” equates to “confidence in an election-based privilege rather than the ultimate expression of a reliance on grace” (p. 106). Paul’s status as God’s elect servant, on the other hand, is demonstrated in his weakness.

In Phil 3:1–11 (chap. 4) the apostle critiques his own former reliance on Jewish heritage in order to warn against possible encroachment of such views. This confidence in such visible markers as circumcision, Jewishness, etc. is now rejected as confidence in the flesh. Instead, the true mark of election is sharing in Christ’s suffering (v. 11). On a minor note, Grindheim speaks approvingly of Paul’s “robust conscience” (K. Stendahl) and does not see actual opponents at work in Philippi.

In Romans 9–11 (chap. 5), rather than Paul’s critique of a Jewish view of election, Grindheim finds Paul’s *own* view of (Israel’s) election. Although there is also a more positive appraisal of Israel’s election in this passage, that does not contradict the critique in other places. Israel’s traditional election privileges are deconstructed in Romans 9–10. However, rather than rejecting Israel’s privileges, Paul then reconstructs them in Romans 11 particularly along the lines of weakness (remnant) and reversal (judgment). Paul does not differ from other Jews by rejecting Israel’s election but by reconfiguring divine election to refer to a remnant, to include Gentiles (which provokes unbelieving Israel to a jealous emulation), and to envision a further eschatological reversal when unbelieving Israel (= “all Israel”) will come to faith in Christ. Grindheim’s brief discussion of provocation would profit from awareness of serious questions on this issue; see M. Nanos, *The Mystery of Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) and now Murray Baker, “Paul and the Salvation of Israel: Paul’s Ministry, the Motif of Jealousy, and Israel’s Yes,” *CBQ* 67 (2005) 469–84.

Following these central exegetical treatments, chapter 6 provides a superficial survey of both the undisputed and disputed Paulines showing that “the identity of the elect is bound up with the principle of reversal of values, manifested by the cruciform existence of the Christ believers” (p. 169). The book closes with a brief summary of its conclusions (chap. 7) and equally brief suggestions as to implications for the NP (chap. 8). An extensive bibliography and indices of references, modern authors, and subjects wrap up the volume.

Two weaknesses of the book are worth pointing out. Grindheim’s methodology in selecting relevant Pauline passages is unclear. While parameters of terminology and metaphor are laid out for the OT, the reader is left wondering why 2 Corinthians 11–12 and Philippians 3 are chosen, but not, for instance, Galatians. Grindheim is undoubtedly correct that in the former two passages Paul critiques claims to privilege for the Jewish people, but is that not even more the case in Galatians? The value of “Jewishness” (Jewish identity) in Paul’s writings seems to be the real subject of the book (p. 7, where “reference to Jewishness” is apparently synonymous with “reference to God’s election”). Election is, at best, implicit in the passages chosen, hinted at by epithets such as “Israel,” “Abraham’s descendants,” etc. (pp. 2, 84–88).

Second, the force of Grindheim's argument against Sanders and the NP was (for me, at least) difficult to follow. He concludes, "In Paul's assessment, the Jewish confidence in the election of Israel must be reproved because it was incompatible with the cross of Christ . . . directed towards a visible religious status, rather than toward Christ and his cross" (p. 200). Paul's critique of Jewish confidence via cruciformity or christocentricity is purportedly radically different from what the NP holds regarding Paul's critique. However, would not many NP proponents find the heart of Paul's critique precisely in such a perceived Jewish reliance on visible markers of religious status (εργα νόμου) rather than on the cruciform πίστις χριστοῦ?

There is much to commend in this book, especially its argument that Paul's view of divine election revolves around the cross of Christ and is expressed in weakness and reversal of values rather than visible blessing and power. Grindheim's pointer to prophetic precursors of this view is also well taken, following the lead of K. Sandnes in *Paul, One of the Prophets?* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991). Thus, divine election is radically Christocentric (echoes of Karl Barth?); Christ must be seen as the key point of discontinuity between Paul's pre- and post-conversion views. Whether this point of discontinuity is downplayed by the NP, as Grindheim claims, will probably depend on which NP proponent one queries.

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Colossians & Philemon. By Marianne Meye Thompson. Two Horizons New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, x + 287 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Thompson's commentary on *Colossians & Philemon* is part of the Two Horizons New Testament Commentary series that features both theological exegesis and theological reflection. Thompson's particular commentary divides into six sections. The first three are devoted to Colossians: Introduction to Colossians (pp. 1–12); Commentary on Colossians (pp. 13–109); and Theological Horizons of Colossians (pp. 111–91). The last three address Philemon: Introduction to Philemon (pp. 193–204); Commentary on Philemon (pp. 205–27); and Theological Horizons of Philemon (pp. 229–66).

As is characteristic of any introduction on Colossians, Thompson handles issues surrounding Colossians as a Pauline work (pp. 2–5); the setting of the letter in connection with Paul's circumstances (pp. 5–9); the situation at Colossae (pp. 6–9); and the theological contribution of Colossians (pp. 9–12). When addressing prefatory questions about Philemon, she treats the occasion for the letter (pp. 194–98); the purpose of the letter (pp. 198–200); authorship and canonicity (pp. 200–202); and slavery in the ancient world (pp. 202–4). Although she "rehearses briefly" the dissenting arguments against Pauline authorship for Colossians, she presents overwhelming acceptance of Paul's authorship for Philemon, beginning with but not limited to Marcion, Tertullian, Ignatius, Jerome, and others. Nevertheless, both are deemed Pauline.

She views the occasion for Colossians (and we might add Philemon because both are carried by the same person, Tychicus) to be twofold: a response to received reports about the church via Epaphras, and an opportunity to reconcile Onesimus to Philemon (Col 4:8–9, Phlm 12–13). What was the nature of these reports? Thompson's position is that "the Colossians are being influenced by Jews or, perhaps better, Jewish Christians, who advocated certain ascetic practices and ecstatic spiritual experiences in order to attain to 'higher levels' of understanding the mysteries of God" (p. 7). Subsequently, the theological contribution of Colossians to Paul's other works emerges: "The death of

Jesus brings redemption and forgiveness (1:13–14; 2:13–14), the pacification of those hostile to God (1:20–22), inclusion of all people in the family of God (1:12, 21–22; 2:11–13), and the granting of new life (2:12–13; 3:1–3)” (p. 12). In other words, Jesus is all we need. As for Philemon, and contrary to various traditions, Thompson avers that “Paul writes primarily to effect reconciliation between Philemon and Onesimus, not as master and slave but as brothers in the Lord.” She continues, “The key words that are to shape their relationship are not master and slave but brother, fellowship (partnership), and love (vv. 16–17)” (p. 199).

Thompson’s commentaries on Colossians (pp. 13–109) and Philemon (pp. 193–204) are presented nicely in a paragraph-by-paragraph, expository-like discourse with the text. She breaks Colossians in fourteen units of thought. Her paragraph divisions for the salutation (1:1–2, 3–8, 9–14); the hymn (1:15–20, 21–23); and the pattern for living (2:16–23, 3:1–4, 5–11, 12–17, 18–4:1, 2–6, 7–18) are similar to those of Peter T. O’Brien (*Colossians, Philemon* [WBC; Waco: Word, 1982]); R. McL. Wilson (*Colossians and Philemon* [ICC; London: T & T Clark International, 2005]); Margaret Y. MacDonald (*Colossians and Ephesians* [SacPag; Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000]); and James D. G. Dunn (*The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* [NIGTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996]). Thompson’s differences are Col 1:21–29; 2:1–7; and 2:8–15. Likewise, her paragraph divisions for Philemon nearly always agree with others. Whereas O’Brien, Wilson, and Dunn divide the text into four units: Phlm 1–3, 4–7, 8–20, and 21–25 (MacDonald does not address Philemon), Thompson’s four paragraph divisions differ only at Phlm 8–16 and 17–25. Nevertheless, most of her paragraph divisions parallel a cross-section of exegetical works.

Common to both the Colossians and Philemon commentary is her approach to the text and subsequent engagement with the text. Each paragraph unit begins with a translation followed by a discussion that addresses key phrases and their theological contribution to the book. Special attention is given to key words, which involve a discussion of the term and a translation. She presents in parenthesis the Greek word and its transliteration. She also interacts succinctly with Jewish and Greco-Roman material of the period, pre- and post-Nicene church fathers, and a variety of recent and not-so-recent commentators. Furthermore, she is deliberately theological, as expected, due to the intent of the series.

While canvassing the theological horizons for Colossians, Thompson begins with a theology of Colossians (pp. 111–31); moves to a continuity/discontinuity survey of Colossians with Paul’s broader theology (pp. 131–54); and ends with a constructive theology for the book (pp. 155–191). Philemon’s theological horizons, however, are limited to a theology of Philemon in the context of biblical theology (pp. 229–46) and a presentation of how Philemon was misconstrued by nineteenth-century American interpreters, although this section also concludes with a constructive theology for the book (pp. 246–66).

Although much could be said about Thompson’s theological horizons, I will limit my comments to two. To begin with, Thompson rightly identifies the central theological theme in Colossians as Christ (p. 113). Although she admits, “Colossians *seems* to introduce no topic not carved or developed more fully in other letters” (p. 143, italics mine), she recognizes a distinctive contribution to Paul’s other works: the letter’s meta-narrative. By this she means it “claims or seeks to give an account of reality that is unified and universal: by explaining all, it can be owned by all” (p. 155). Thus she muses, “Colossians proposes a metanarrative that begins with God’s creation of a good world; identifies the situation of the inhabitants of the world in terms of captivity, darkness, and sin; claims that in Christ, in his identification with humankind, and in his death on a cross God has provided for the world’s deliverance and healing; and anticipates the renewal of the world, which will bring all creation to its consummation” (p. 163).

Next, she rejects any form of dualism in the book of Philemon that might suggest a separation of the “spiritual” from the “social” or any sort of move that might suggest the church is only a “spiritual reality” separated from the world. “Rather,” she says, “the church embodies God’s vision of *the new humanity*, part of God’s purpose to bring peace, wholeness, and harmony, in the form of restored relationships with nature, other humans, and God” (p. 254; italics mine).

Thompson is to be applauded for her expositional and theological presentation. She covers in a direct and succinct manner background, exegetical, and theological issues that typically arise when studying Colossians and Philemon, while at the same time stirring up a fresh cauldron of spell-binding theological thoughts for today’s readers. The well-written and easy-to-read presentation will be attractive for a broad audience. Unfortunately, Thompson fails to interact with William J. Webb’s work on *Slaves, Women & Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001). After her discussion of the hermeneutical approaches in the nineteenth century, a brief comment on Webb’s work and a signaling of where she agreed (or disagreed) would have been helpful. Nevertheless, this commentary is an excellent work and well suited for students, pastors, and other Christian leaders.

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The Revelation of John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse. By Stephen S. Smalley. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005, xvii + 633 pp., \$52.00.

Why another book on Revelation and its symbolic world? In light of the numerous recent works on the Apocalypse, the casual reader may think that every possible angle has already been examined with regard to the last book of the NT. While it is true that there is a literal storehouse of materials in existence dealing with Revelation, the fact remains that the Apocalypse is an amazing book whose notoriety arises from an almost chaotic diversity of interpretations. Into this cacophony of voices Stephen Smalley offers a balanced treatment of Revelation as a cosmic drama. Smalley’s treatment enlarges on his earlier introduction to the Apocalypse (*Thunder and Love* [Milton Keynes: Word, 1994]) and interacts with the works of other scholars from G. B. Caird through G. Beale. In fact, these works (and others) are constantly referenced throughout this new effort to explain the book of Revelation.

Smalley introduces his discussion with a brief twenty-two page treatment of his views on the origin, date, situation, character, and structure of Revelation. The introduction offers an explanation of the approach used in this new commentary, which involves a synchronic method in which the Apocalypse is treated as a unified narrative with special emphasis on its dramatic nature. The reader also finds here a view for the date of Revelation; the work came from the hand of John the beloved disciple sometime between AD 64 and 70. In fact, this commentary presents the Apocalypse as the first work of the disciple, followed by his writing (or influence on) the Epistles and the Gospel of John.

After this interesting introduction, the bulk of the work discusses Revelation as two “acts” comprising seven “scenes” sandwiched between a prologue (Rev 1:1–18) and an epilogue (Rev 22:18–21). Act 1 (“Creation, and Salvation through Judgment”) comprises Rev 1:19–11:19, while Act 2 (“Salvation through Judgment, and New Creation”) encompasses Rev 12:1–22:17. Simply stated, each “Act” contains several “scenes” and intervals (e.g. Act 1 contains the first three scenes and three intervals of the apocalyptic drama). There are few surprises in Smalley’s discussion of structure of the book, but the in-

teresting (almost chiasmic) titles offered to each act provide the reader a foreshadowing for the content that follows. Each chapter of the commentary works with a particular section or "scene" of the Apocalypse by presenting the author's translation of the text, a textual analysis of the Greek, a discussion of the literary setting, a commentary, and a discussion of the theology of that section. The commentary also contains informative excurses scattered among the various chapters.

The most distinguishing aspect of this new commentary is the location of Revelation within the genre of Greek drama. Smalley's treatment here is not novel and in fact represents a variation of other attempts to treat Revelation as a drama. The author even references works such as E. W. Benson's *The Apocalypse* (London: Macmillan, 1900) and J. W. Bowman's work on the dramatic structure of Revelation (*Int* 9 [1955] 436–53). Ironically missing is the more recent discussion on Revelation as drama found in the works of James L. Blevins (especially his book *Revelation as Drama* [Nashville: Broadman, 1984]). Drawing somewhat on the work of Ray Summers (*Worthy is the Lamb* [Nashville: Broadman, 1951]), Blevins offers a full-fledged treatment of Revelation as a drama intended for the Greek theatre of Ephesus. In fact, Blevins contends that the author of the Apocalypse expected the work to be acted out. Given Smalley's contentions regarding the dramatic genre of the Apocalypse, it is a bit surprising that he ignores the wealth of material to be mined from Blevins's work.

Nevertheless, Smalley's treatment of Revelation tends a bit in a different direction from his predecessors. Utilizing the elements of Greek drama as a means of analyzing the author's intent, Smalley notes that Revelation, like some forms of Greek tragedy, is meant to be heard, experienced, or even seen, not just read. In this approach he agrees somewhat with the view of David Barr (see especially Barr's treatment of Revelation as "oral enactment" in *Int* 38 [1984] 39–50 and *Int* 40 [1986] 243–56 and his work in the early 1990s on the readers/hearers of Revelation). In other words, the text of the Apocalypse is aural by nature, i.e. meant to be heard and read aloud as one would act out a role in a play. In an excursus on "Graeco-Roman Drama and Revelation" (pp. 109–12), Smalley offers some description of his understanding of the dramatic nature of Revelation as well as some discussion of ancient Jewish literary forms related to a dramatic presentation. No clear definition of the genre is given, however, and little discussion is presented regarding some of the basic elements of Greek drama and whether or not they appear in Revelation.

Smalley's synchronic approach is one of the strengths of this work. Focusing on the theology rather than the chronology of Revelation allows him to avoid some of the entanglements of eschatological debate that often monopolize interpretations of this book. Following the work of Beale, Smalley offers a modified idealist approach that views the Apocalypse as a "symbolic portrayal of the timeless conflict between the forces of good and evil, God and Satan" (p. 16). This conflict will realize its final consummation in judgment and salvation, two aspects of Revelation that are not always presented chronologically according to Smalley. In fact, he emphasizes the importance of a view of God's sovereignty and interaction in history that results ultimately in the establishment of God's kingdom. The center of this sovereign interaction is the Christ-event, and indeed Smalley locates the high point of Revelation's eschatology in the exaltation of God and the Lamb in chapters 4 and 5. According to Smalley, the Christ-event provides a fulcrum of sorts by which all of salvation history is divided. Judgment and salvation are understood as direct results of how others respond to Christ. The symbols of the Apocalypse thus are depicted as the earthly counterparts of the heavenly reality of Christ's exaltation and God's sovereignty. In an almost Platonic fashion, the heavenly events seem to inspire emulation on earth.

Revelation, then, is a testimony of God's sovereignty and the explication of his plan in Christ for the created universe. This plan is disclosed by means of a series of visions

that present the fulfillment of God's salvific purposes for the world, purposes that are consummated through judgment both in history and in eternity. Divine judgment includes an announcement of salvation, since God's judgment promises justice and deliverance for those who embrace the Lamb. Thus the book of Revelation becomes a kind of encouraging word for the embattled believers who may feel the weight of a disagreeable evil age pressing against them. This balance between judgment and salvation is a central theme according to Smalley and makes up the primary division of his structure of the book.

Smalley presents these materials in a very readable manner. Even though the subtitle of the book reminds the reader that this is a commentary on the Greek text of Revelation, the truth is that this work is easily accessible to those who may not have the necessary background in Greek. Smalley offers helpful indices and references, and his use of secondary literature provides a wealth of helpful information for interpreting the sometimes difficult passages of this work. Smalley's commentary will prove helpful to students of the Apocalypse and could be used in a variety of contexts from upper-level undergraduate courses to graduate-level studies.

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Rhetoric at the Boundaries: The Art and Theology of New Testament Chain-Link Transitions. By Bruce W. Longenecker. Waco: Baylor University Press, 2005, x + 305 pp., \$39.95.

Anyone who has worked closely with the text of the NT has encountered passages in which the sequence of thought seems odd, awkward, or disjointed. Such passages lead interpreters to propose theories of compositional interpolation, scribal emendation, or authorial ineptitude. It is precisely this sort of passage that Bruce Longenecker, Lecturer of New Testament Studies at the University of St. Andrews in Scotland, argues might well reflect first-rate rhetoric rather than second-rate logic. His study of chain-link transitions in this book makes a strong case for his thesis.

Longenecker defines chain-link transition as "the overlapping of material at a text-unit boundary in order to facilitate a transition" (p. 5). It is a pattern that was present well before the NT was written and that was recognized in the work of at least two ancient rhetoricians. Longenecker has three aims for his in-depth study of the technique: "(1) to give clarity to the form, character, and function of chain-link interlock, (2) to cite instances of its occurrence within selected Pauline, Johannine, and Lukan texts, and (3) to study the consequent structural, theological, and/or historical aspects that arise from such occurrences within New Testament texts" (p. 6).

After a ten-page introduction, chapters 2–5 review the evidence from Lucian of Samosata and Quintilian, contrast chain-link transition with other rhetorical devices (e.g. inclusio, chiasmus, concentric symmetry, alternation, word chain), discuss the anatomy of chain-link transition as an inter-textual (rather than intra-textual) technique, and explore eleven examples from OT and extra-biblical sources. Chapters 6–9 then investigate fifteen NT passages in which Longenecker finds chain-link transition—five from Paul's letters, four from Revelation, two from John's Gospel, and four from the book of Acts. Chapter 10 builds on the discussion of the Acts passages to consider four issues related to the interpretation of that book. A five-page conclusion provides a helpful summary table of the NT passages studied and a collation of "some of the more significant conclusions" from the study.

Rhetoric at the Boundaries is well researched and well documented. It is also well written with a few flights of literary fancy (e.g. “a reservoir of transitional oil which lubricates the structural pivot”). It is wide-ranging but focused, and it made me want to dive into the text of the NT to look for other possible occurrences of chain-link transition. As is true with all books, this one has areas of comparative strength and areas of comparative weakness. The simplest approach is to walk through the content, noting both.

Chapters 2–5 lay an excellent foundation for the study, defining the nature of the pattern, clarifying its character and function, and demonstrating its existence in textual predecessors to and contemporaries of the NT. The discussion of medial-level examples from Paul’s letters (chap. 6) demonstrates that Paul combined a mastery of his subject matter with a concern for his audience. Where Paul’s modern readers appreciate linear literary logic, his ancient listeners appreciated the smooth rhetorical transition that the chain-link pattern provides.

Concerning the four macro-level passages from Revelation (chap. 7) Longenecker writes that 22:6–9 “provides one of the clearest examples of chain-link construction in the ancient world” (p. 103). That analysis might well be true, but his explanation is somewhat less clear. He spends nearly six pages discussing other aspects of the passage and only three pages on the chain-link transition itself; reversing those proportions would have helped. On the other hand, his discussion of the other three examples is good, and his reflections on the way in which chain-link transitions at Rev 3:21–22 and 22:6–9 contribute to the creation of a “new generic hybrid” are particularly beneficial.

Chapter 8 explores two passages in John’s Gospel: 12:20–50 and 14:30–31. The discussion of the former passage is solid. It makes good use of verbal parallels, particularly those in verses 37–50, which look backward to the first half of the book. It shows how the link passage is a concentration point for primary themes in the book. It develops well the narrative and theological significance of the link passage. The discussion of John 14:30–31, however, is less helpful in that it engages in a discussion of the compositional history of the Gospel. All such discussions are, of necessity, conjectural. In this instance it tends to distract from the primary focus of the study. The inclusion of an appendix at the end of the chapter instead of at the end of the book also interrupts the flow of the argument.

The discussion of the four macro-level passages in Acts (chap. 9) is excellent. The implications drawn from these passages are developed in chapter 10. Again, a digression to discuss four alternate explanations for the sequence of events in Acts 11:19–12:25 is longer than necessary (ten pages) and disrupts the flow of the chapter. Although it is a minor point, the discussion of the “start” of the second text-unit as it relates to Acts 19:21–41 seems incongruous with the overall premise of the book, which is, after all, that chain-link transition blurs text-unit boundaries. As was true of the preceding chapter, the inclusion of two appendices interrupts the flow of the argument.

In chapter 10, Longenecker explores four issues in the interpretation of Acts: (1) the unity of Luke-Acts; (2) the structure of Acts; (3) the theology of Acts; and (4) Pauline chronology. He concludes that the study of chain-link transition breaks no new ground in connection with the unity of Luke-Acts, but it does provide supporting evidence for that unity. Does such a conclusion warrant eleven pages of text? The contribution of chain-link transition to the structure of Acts is significant in that it results in a unique outline consisting of four text units (Acts 1:1–8:3; 8:4–12:25; 13:1–19:41; 20:1–28:31). Both Longenecker’s analysis and the resulting outline are persuasive. The proposed outline leads to an excellent discussion of the theology of Acts, highlighting the reliability of Jesus’ words, the fulfillment of Scripture, and the way in which persecution promotes the progress of the gospel. Unfortunately, the consideration of Pauline chronology is disappointing. After dismantling other arguments that contest the historical accuracy

of Barnabas's and Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 11:27–30, Longenecker then constructs his own “novel explanation of as to why the [chronology] may, in fact, be skewed” (p. 256). In so doing, he argues that Luke is more concerned with rhetoric than with history and so drives a wedge between the two interests rather than seeking a way to unite them.

The review of chapter 10 provides a good synopsis of this book. The recognition of chain-link transition makes its greatest contributions in the areas of structure and theology. Its proposed contribution to history focuses on the compositional history of texts and is less persuasive. The “value-added” for NT interpretation that the first two areas provide makes this book worth owning.

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Contextualization in the New Testament: Patterns for Theology and Mission. By Dean Flemming. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2005, 344 pp., \$26.00 paper.

Dean Flemming, Nazarene missionary and NT scholar, has written the most extensive treatment of contextualization in the NT to date. Born of his experience teaching seminary students in the Philippines and Switzerland, the author presents how the NT models the contextualization process and is itself a product of it. In two chapters on Acts, five on Paul, one on the Gospels, and one on Revelation, he admirably achieves his twofold aim: “to discover how they [the NT writings] demonstrate the task of doing context-sensitive theology; and second, to reflect on what these patterns and precedents teach us about how the gospel might become embodied within our diverse cultures and life settings today” (pp. 15–16).

In an introductory chapter, in which he sets out clearly the plan of his book, including its limits, Fleming offers a definition of contextualization and a reflection on the “Jesus Model” of incarnation and transformation in relation to culture. For the author, contextualization is “the dynamic and comprehensive process by which the gospel is incarnated within a concrete historical or cultural situation.” Through contextualization, the gospel is able to come “to authentic expression in the local context and at the same time prophetically transform the context” (p. 19).

The author covers the first half of the book of Acts as a presentation of the early church's activity of bridging cultural boundaries. Fleming provides a solid analysis of cultural context features and a keen assessment of the church's theologizing at the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15). The other chapter on Acts deals with the preaching of Paul in the book's second half (Acts 13, 14, 17). Depending on socio-rhetorical analysis, he studies how the speeches were contextually persuasive; he offers a helpful comparison chart.

Flemming's five-chapter consideration of Paul includes three chapters that overview the apostle's contextualization practice followed by two that treat case studies from two epistles. The first foundational chapter on Paul draws on J. Christiaan Beker's “coherence and contingency” model and presents “the gospel” as the coherent center of Paul's theology. It also describes how Paul's letters illustrate the way this gospel, in terms of its theological vocabulary and imagery, is recontextualized from one missionary, church-planting situation to the next. Fleming faces squarely the issues of whether such contextualizing means the content is changed and whether such flexibility leads to inconsistency on Paul's part. He concludes that, since the gospel's “inner logic” and

not the audience or the issues he addresses directs Paul's theological reflection, the apostle's theological content does not change (p. 112). Flemming sees the diversity born of flexibility not as a mark of inconsistency but as a "part of a larger coherent whole, one that transcends a strict side-by-side comparison of individual assertions" (p. 114).

The second foundational chapter considers Paul and culture, first in terms of the threefold Jewish, Greek, and Roman cultural context and then in terms of the general ancient Mediterranean context. He concludes that Paul did not function strictly as a cross-cultural missionary, "if by that term we mean someone who moves from one culture into another and learns its language and ways in order to bring the gospel to it" (pp. 124–25). Paul's attitude towards culture was "affirming," and Paul saw a threefold impact of the gospel on culture: relativizing, confronting, and transforming.

Flemming's final foundational study is on Paul's use of Scripture and apostolic tradition as another facet of his contextualization. The author presents Paul's flexible appropriation of text form and multiple contemporary Jewish interpretational methods and concludes that Paul's practice legitimizes no one interpretational method. It is a hermeneutical perspective that consistently guides Paul, one that is "determined by the gospel and directed to the church, the end-time community, with the goal of transforming the people of God" (p. 166). Embracing *sensus plenior*, Flemming claims Paul handles the OT more as a preacher than an exegete and as a result "the relationship between understanding and application becomes almost seamless" (p. 169). What keeps the apostle's "context-oriented" interpretational approach from becoming "context-determined" is the guidance of "the gospel" and the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Flemming sees even more flexibility in Paul's contextualizing of early Christian tradition, but in his conclusion he notes the hermeneutical approach to both is basically the same.

In his two case study chapters, the author effectively explains (1) the way Paul addresses the Corinthians regarding a cultural behavior pattern (meat offered to idols in 1 Corinthians 8–10) and a cultural thought pattern (spiritual immortality vs. bodily resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15); and (2) the way he confronts syncretism ("over-contextualization") at Colossae. Not only is his exposition strongly illuminated by rhetorical and cultural analysis, he gleans sound principles for contextualizing today (pp. 212–13, 232–33).

The two remaining chapters in the book treat the four Gospels and the book of Revelation. Flemming labels the Gospels "contextualized narratives" for distinct "target audiences," which use popular literary and rhetorical conventions "in order to persuasively communicate the good news of Jesus and transform their audiences" (p. 240). He illustrates how each Gospel accomplishes this for its target audience by interpreting the gospel story in an ecclesial, missional, and transformational way. With the same Spirit to guide us as the one who guided the Gospel writers, the twenty-first century church can take the Gospels as precedents and models for what it means to "retell the story for new target audiences" (p. 265). With a strong grasp of the historical-cultural context for the writing of the book of Revelation, the author consistently uses the particulars of the seven churches' situation to interpret chapters 4 through 22. The resulting hermeneutic is a combination of preterist and final futurist approaches. Flemming sums up the book of Revelation's "highly contextualized theological response to the situation of Christians living in a pagan society" and gives eight principles for how John's apocalyptic "alternate vision of the world" could shape the church's theologizing today (pp. 291–95). Actually, these principles well sum up what the entire NT has to contribute to contextualized theologizing.

Flemming's final chapter, "Contextualizing the Gospel for Today," applies the fruit of his biblical study to the contextualization task. He contends that the NT's dynamic and

context-specific theologizing should encourage us to see that our present-day “diversity in the way we think about and live out the gospel is not a problem to be avoided but a gift to the church” (p. 300). In light of this diversity, the author addresses the question of unity in theology and the criteria for distinguishing authentic and inauthentic contextual expressions of the gospel. He answers the unity question by pointing to the gospel as the defining, norming, and “living story” that will provide coherence as we embrace its metanarrative. The four criteria he presents for discerning the limits of authentic contextual theology are (1) the biblical witness and the gospel (Scripture); (2) the guidance of the Spirit leading the community into all truth (John 16:13); (3) historical tradition and the intercultural critique of the wider Christian community testing whether the expression rings true for them; and (4) the results of further mission and transformation (pp. 303–5).

This is the first work by an evangelical to deal extensively and in depth with the NT’s practice of contextualization. Previously, only brief treatments (e.g. Hesselgrave and Rommen) or in-depth studies of portions of the NT (e.g. Hertig and Gallagher on Acts) have been available. The author writes a truly interdisciplinary work in which fruit of NT studies (particularly the socio-rhetorical and cultural analysis approaches), missiology, and two-thirds world theology inform each other. He shows both a judicious handling of the secondary literature and a balanced approach to contextualization as the gospel’s transforming engagement with a culture. His summary conclusions after each significant NT example of contextualization, together with his timely application to the contextualization challenges in many different twenty-first century cultures, provide principles and guidance for the task today. Though space limitations probably prevented it, the volume would have been even more useful if it had explored the contextualization practice of the writers of the General Epistles and the Epistle to the Hebrews.

For all the positives, I must register a number of concerns. Sometimes, it appears that the author so focuses on contextual factors in the first-century situation, particularly socio-rhetorical and literary ones, that he loses sight of other more immediate causal factors. Are all the speeches in Acts, including Acts 13, examples of Greco-Roman rhetorical structuring (p. 59) or does Jewish prophetic and synagogue discourse practice play a part? Is imagery in Revelation the product of the appropriation of ancient myths (pp. 275–76) or a reporting of what he actually saw in the vision? The author’s conclusion that Paul’s exegetical practice indicates that he did not view Scripture’s meaning as objective and fixed (pp. 169–70, 180–81) leads to an approach to contextualization in which the Scriptures (the gospel) as the source of the truth to be contextualized and as the standard for distinguishing authentic and inauthentic contextualizing do not appear to have the necessary stability and precision of content to pursue a contextualization that can effectively guard against syncretism. The same holds true for the boundary between contextualization practiced by the Scripture writers (e.g. the Gospel writers) and how we must practice it today. For Flemming, the Scripture’s “privileged” position is more of that of an “inspired casebook” than that of a “referential standard.” In practice, this reduces the extent and clarity of Scripture’s guidance as the functional authority for the contextualization task. A final concern is that, though the author rightly recognizes that contextualization is “profoundly missional” (p. 319), he does not consistently assess how the writings of the NT were missionary documents, that is, how the message of each was presented as “good news” to particular first-century contexts.

As he concludes his volume, Flemming emphasizes attitudes of self-giving love and humble identification with others. He notes that the contextualization task is never finished and, in the end, is God’s work because it is part of the church’s mission. His volume will be an indispensable aid to the church’s further contextualization work, which he commends as follows: “May faithful communities of disciples in a multitude

of local settings purpose to truly listen to Scripture, to the Spirit, to Christians through the ages, and to one another, as they learn to sing the old, old story in new keys" (p. 322).

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The New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers. Vol. 1: *The Reception of the New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers*. Edited by Andrew F. Gregory and Christopher M. Tuckett. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005, xiii + 375 pp., \$99.00.

Both this book and its companion volume, *Trajectories through the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers*, are intended as publications commemorating the centennial of the appearance of *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1905), which quickly became a landmark for those investigating questions like the canon, Gospel traditions in the second century, Christology, the early church and its ministry, and a myriad of other issues concerning early Christian interpretation.

The editors of these two new volumes hoped "to update, to develop, and to widen the scope of the issues considered" by the original Oxford committee (the "preface" to each vol., p. v), and unquestionably they have produced a welcome supplement to the 1905 parent work. These essays (especially those of volume 2, *Trajectories*) grew out of several papers presented at a conference held at Lincoln College, University of Oxford, in April 5–7, 2004. They were later expanded by the addition of others written solely for publication in these volumes and address a wide spectrum of issues: the Gospels and Gospel traditions in the second century, the influence of Paul on the early church, the origin of infant baptism, the nature of prophecy, the Eucharist, diversity, and various themes like wisdom.

Due to limitations of space, I shall devote the rest of my remarks to volume 1, *Reception*, for it is here that the central concern of the original 1905 work is addressed and its conclusions reassessed. What evidence is there in the apostolic fathers for a knowledge and use of those writings now included in the NT? All of the writings examined in the 1905 work are reexamined here by competent scholars: the *Didache* (Christopher M. Tuckett); *1 Clement* (Andrew F. Gregory); the seven epistles of Ignatius (Paul Foster); Polycarp's *Letter to the Philippians* (Michael W. Holmes); the *Epistle of Barnabas* (James Carleton-Paget); *2 Clement* (Gregory and Tuckett); and the *Shepherd of Hermas* (Joseph Verheyden). As in 1905, the *Epistle to Diognetus* and the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* are excluded from the systematic investigation.

Unlike 1905, this study is prefaced by four important preliminary inquiries: Bart D. Ehrman investigates the manuscript tradition of the apostolic fathers and compares it with that of the NT itself (pp. 9–27); William L. Petersen questions the integrity and state of the NT writings at the time of the apostolic fathers (pp. 29–46); J. Keith Elliott wants to increase the inclusion of the apostolic fathers as witnesses in the apparatus of critical editions of the Greek NT (pp. 47–58); and the editors, Gregory and Tuckett, address methodological questions such as "what constitutes the use of one text in another" (p. 64); what is the distinction between mere "allusion" and a deliberate "quotation"; what are appropriate criteria for judging dependence (e.g. the use of introductory formula like "it is written" or traces of recognizable redaction, which is Helmut Koester's rigid criterion for Gospel traditions); and how should the degree of certainty in one's findings be assessed.

As one might expect, the modern findings of 2005 are sometimes more tentative than those of a century ago, which reflect "perhaps the optimism and confidence of a bygone

age" (p. 62). Yet the new study is just as much—or even more so—a product of its own age, with our modern emphasis on diversity and individuality. In spite of their "Reflections on Method" (pp. 61–82), the editors refused to impose any systematic framework or criteria, preferring instead to allow each contributor to "offer his own assessment of the particular features which affect the manner in which and the extent to which the text that he considers quotes or alludes to the New Testament" (p. 69). As a result, their investigations follow different paths: one begins his search for possible parallels with Acts; another starts with Paul, while the majority turns first to the Synoptic Gospels. By way of contrast, in the 1905 volume, all of the contributors followed a proscribed order in the presentation of their investigations: Acts, Epistles (in canonical order), Revelation, Synoptic Gospels, John, and apocryphal writings—each presented in groupings with descending levels of certainty, which they labeled as A, B, C, and D. This systematization obviously makes the 1905 volume a better reference tool.

The 1905 volume also presented far more "parallels" than does its modern counterpart, and each of these parallels was assigned a specific number for ease of reference. All of these texts were displayed in full, with each potential parallel printed alongside its NT counterpart(s) for ease of comparison. Finally, the volume ends with two tables summarizing the 1905 committee's findings along with indices of the passages that they examined. The 2005 volume contains none of these advantages. Far fewer parallels are considered, with the majority of those considered back in 1905 being dismissed in footnotes. Holmes on Polycarp stands alone in referring to the "passage numbers" in the 1905 volume. His fellow contributors are usually content to cite just the page numbers for the older work, and sometimes they do not even bother with this (e.g. pp. 167 n. 36, 170 nn. 44–50, 183 nn. 113–15, 241–47, 291 n. 143). In my judgment, they all would have done better to follow the example of Holmes, who displays fully all the texts involved in a supposed parallel along with careful notes on textual variants. In the essay on *Barnabas*, only passages from this Father are presented, forcing the reader to look up the NT passages to see the comparison. In addition, the essay on the *Shepherd of Hermas* displays no texts for comparison. Thus, those wanting to see for themselves the potential parallels will have to go back to the 1905 volume, which fortunately has been reprinted in paperback (reprint ed.; Whitefish, MT: Kessinger, 2004).

Petersen's criticism of Inge as being "pious" but "presumptuous," "dogmatic," and also "out of step" with the critical approach of the other contributors back in 1905 (p. 31, n. 12; cf. his remarks in n. 33) is unfair and untrue. Inge was not alone in his conclusion that references to the NT were made from memory: Carlyle concluded the same about *1 Clement* (1905 volume, pp. 42, 49), as did Benecke about Polycarp ("The quotations have the appearance of having been made from memory; rarely, if ever, from a book"; *ibid.* 84). Of course, such notions do not fit Petersen's theory about the fluid nature of the NT text in the early second century, neither does the Alands's analysis in their *Text of the New Testament*. His appeal to them (pp. 40–41) ignores the context in which their statement is found: the Alands are discussing the so-called "Western" text, not the entire manuscript tradition of the NT! Second, he takes their use of *freischwebend* as an adverb modifying the verb *zitiert* (Alands, *Text des NT*, 2d ed., p. 64 = ET, pp. 54–55) and then uses it as a predicate adjective to describe the text of Matthew itself during the first and second centuries (Petersen, "Textual Traditions Examined," *Reception*, p. 41). In doing so, Petersen ignores the other *clear* statements by the Alands that the norm during this period was manuscripts such as P⁷⁵ that preserved their exemplars in a relatively faithful form (*Text des NT*, pp. 67–69, 74, 79 = ET, pp. 56–59, 64, 69 § 7).

Fortunately, the other contributors to this volume do a better job in keeping their biases in check. Their careful review of the secondary literature from the past century (I missed any notice of Heinrich Rathke's dissertation published as *Ignatius von Antiochien und die Paulusbriege* [Berlin: Akademie, 1967]) and their balanced discussion

of opposing positions (e.g. Koester vs. Massaux) make the 2005 volume a necessary supplement to—but not a replacement for—its 1905 predecessor.

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Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures. By Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005, 345 pp., \$19.99 paper.

This is an important book about a movement sparking considerable discussion in evangelical circles. The authors, both members of the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary, bring to their task diversity in age and background. Gibbs was ordained in the Church of England more than forty years ago and is a U.K. citizen; Bolger began the research for the book as part of his Ph.D. studies and is a native of Los Angeles. The book is the product of five years of detailed research, including extensive searches of the Internet and websites, dozens of interviews, and numerous visits to sites across the United States and the United Kingdom. It is an impressive achievement that has garnered praise from leaders in the emerging church, and it is a work that deserves careful examination.

The book is composed of eleven chapters, with an informative preface, a brief conclusion, two fascinating, lengthy, and important appendices, and a helpful index. The best starting point for understanding the book is the last major section, "Appendix B: Research Methodology." In that appendix, the authors give the criteria they used in the crucial task of identifying which churches should be included in their research as emerging. This is a crucial task, because one of the difficulties in discussing the emerging church is the diversity of the congregations that fit under this umbrella. The most important criteria are those that highlight the connection of emerging churches and postmodern culture. The authors limit emerging churches to those located in countries experiencing cultural transition from modernity to postmodernity, giving special attention to groups that "maintain a strong corporate expression outside the church walls through the forms of popular culture . . . groups that are strongly committed to engaging the outside culture" (p. 330).

With those criteria in place, the authors began in 2000 to conduct an exhaustive search "for anyone and everything associated with innovative churches" (p. 331). They eventually came to about forty to fifty churches deemed "most significant" in terms of their criteria from the United Kingdom and another forty to fifty from the United States. Next, they interviewed the leaders of these churches. The interviews provide the major source of material for this book. Gibbs and Bolger support the interview material with "document analysis, primarily through websites" (p. 334), but the interviews dominate the book in two ways. First, while most scholarly books contain copious footnotes or endnotes citing books and articles to support the claims of authors, this book has relatively few such footnotes but dozens of quotations from these interviews. Second, the interviews are the primary source for Appendix A, which is called "Leaders in Their Own Words," and contains the stories of fifty emerging church leaders, taken from transcripts of interviews or submitted by the leaders in writing. This appendix is ninety pages long, forming more than one-quarter of the book, and is completely from the leaders without comment from the authors. Appendix A is the second section of the book that a reader should tackle, for it introduces the reader to the people cited throughout the book.

These fifty stories are worth the price of the book by themselves. They give the reader a sense of the motivations behind the leaders of emerging churches, the diverse

types of groups being produced out of these motivations, and some of the common features as well. Twenty-four of the leaders are from the United Kingdom, and twenty-six from the United States, highlighting the fact that emerging churches are appearing throughout the Western world. The note of protest is quite strong in the stories of many. Some describe feeling stifled by and alienated from existing churches, and wanting churches more open to creativity and the use of the arts. Others felt the culture of the church was so different from the popular culture that those they reached in the culture could not adapt to the church. Still others felt that there were aspects of modern culture that hindered existing churches from faithfully following Jesus. Among the fifty leaders whose stories are included, the voices of some are heard more often than others. Of the ten most often quoted, eight were from the United Kingdom, giving the book a strong British flavor. By contrast, some of the figures most prominent in American discussions are minor in this book, particularly the figure most associated with the emerging church in North America, Brian McLaren.

After reading the two appendices, the reader may turn to the book proper. It begins with a brief preface and acknowledgments. Chapter 1 gives eleven reasons why the Western church today must study culture. While some of the reasons given are questionable, the claim on the whole is well supported. In fact, an additional reason was surprisingly omitted: we need to study culture to recognize the areas of fallenness in it and avoid unwittingly adopting or accommodating them in our churches.

The second chapter is the most important in the book, for it asks the central question, "What is the emerging church?" Gibbs and Bolger emphasize that the emerging church is not just another approach to reaching young people, though many in the emerging church began in "Gen-X" churches. The issue is not generational, but cultural. They offer this definition: "Emerging churches are communities that practice the way of Jesus within postmodern cultures" (p. 44). The last phrase is crucial. Elsewhere they refer to emerging churches as "churches that take culture, specifically postmodern culture, seriously" (p. 43). They place leaders such as Mark Driscoll, Chris Seay, and Erwin McManus outside the emerging church because they believe their churches changed only "surface techniques" while the "bulk of church practice remained the same" (p. 30). By contrast, "[t]aking postmodernity seriously requires that all church practices come into question" (p. 34).

All those identified as emerging churches share three core practices. Six additional, derivative practices are common, but not universal, among them. The core three are "(1) identifying with the life of Jesus, (2) transforming secular space, and (3) living as community" (pp. 43–44). The six additional practices are welcoming strangers, serving with generosity, participating as producers, creating as created beings, leading as a body, and taking part in spiritual activities. The succeeding chapters examine these nine patterns.

Chapter 3 looks at identifying with Jesus. This, for emerging churches, means first of all identifying with the *missio Dei*, God's redemptive mission to the world; indeed, some prefer the term "missional" to "emerging." The message they proclaim is the good news Jesus proclaimed, that the kingdom is present, and all are invited to participate in the redemption of the world. They give much less emphasis to the death of Christ, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life, and focus instead on inviting people to follow Jesus and be on mission with him in the world. Emerging churches seek to create communities of followers of Jesus, who "express the kingdom in all they do" (p. 59). Church forms are secondary. While there is little objectionable in this chapter, it is questionable whether or not what they advocate here is limited to emerging churches. Many of the motifs in this chapter reminded me of themes I have heard for years in traditional churches and in the writings of traditional authors such as John Stott and Henry Blackaby. Also, those cited in this chapter seem to neglect personal salvation in favor

of social transformation, while the gospel includes both. Likewise, we need not reject Paul to identify with Jesus. Both/and seems a better option than forcing a false dichotomy of either/or.

The second core practice, described in chapter 4, is important for understanding the postmodern culture to which the emerging church is responding. Most evangelicals have seen postmodernism as centering on the issue of epistemology and our ability to know truth. The emerging church sees modernity as characterized by the creation of a secular/sacred divide, especially the creation of secular space, a realm without God. Postmodernity and the emerging church reject the dualisms of modernity; the emerging church seeks the transformation of secular space.

They rightly reject dualisms in seeking to embrace transcendence and immanence, both in concern for worship that engages the mind and the body and in the belief that God can be found in popular culture as well as religious culture. But some dualisms are rooted, not in modernity, but in Scripture. The one born of God is not to love the world, nor the things in the world (1 John 2:15); believers are called to focus on what is eternal, not what is temporary (2 Cor 4:18); they are to see themselves as aliens and pilgrims in this world, and citizens of the heavenly city (Heb 11:13–16). In their zeal to eliminate modern dualisms they see as contrary to the call to live incarnationally, emerging churches are in danger of failing to recognize biblical dualisms and the way that the fallen, negative elements in postmodern culture participate in those dualisms. While recognizing the need to balance the call to cultural relevance with biblical faithfulness, they almost never discuss aspects of postmodern culture that are irreconcilable with the gospel, though they see many such aspects in modernity.

The third core practice of emerging churches is living as community (chapter 5). Some of their main points (that the church is people, not a place; a community more than a meeting) are widely recognized as reflecting NT teaching, even if not always implemented well in existing churches. But emerging churches link this principle with their emphases on the kingdom and the elimination of secular space and believe that the creation of community calls for deconstruction of a variety of church practices “to make room for the kingdom” (p. 94). The emphasis on community tends to produce “small groups or networks of small groups” (p. 109). More than half of those interviewed are involved in what could be called cell or house churches. A number mentioned their discomfort when groups grow to forty or so, and expressed no desire to grow. In fact, Gibbs and Bolger see growth as a problem for emerging churches. On the one hand, they believe that emerging churches have significant evangelistic advantages. On the other hand, a number of emerging church leaders see growth as endangering community and express surprisingly little interest in reaching more people, raising the question of whether or not emerging churches are in fact maintaining an evangelistic focus in their communities.

The last six chapters cover six derivative practices that flow from the core practices described in chapters 3–5. These are not universal among emerging churches, but are common. The first two of these practices, “welcoming the stranger” and “serving with generosity,” are discussed in chapters 6 and 7. Both chapters deal with hospitality and may be considered together. Emerging churches are critical of what they see as the heavy-handed, controlling, manipulative form of evangelism common in existing churches. But the problems they see in evangelism are caused not by modernity but by sinfulness, and are not true of all traditional churches. Emerging churches have no monopoly on gracious humility and generous service to others, and indeed those attitudes are often not in evidence when they speak of existing (non-emergent) churches. Beyond the danger of misrepresenting these existing churches, the chapters contain numerous provocative statements that raise concerns about what emerging churches do believe about evangelism. Statements such as, “We are definitely not out on the streets trying to get people to accept Jesus into their hearts so that they can be saved from hell”

(p. 123), or “Because emerging churches believe the presence of the reign of God is beyond the church, they are accepting of other faith communities” (p. 133), or “I no longer believe in evangelism” (p. 135) are troubling statements bound to raise questions.

Chapters 8 and 9 can also be treated together, for they deal largely with two themes noticeable in the worship of most emerging churches. Chapter 8 emphasizes the commitment of emerging churches to widespread participation in every aspect of worship. This emphasis again tends to keep emerging churches small, for size inhibits participation. Some churches omit the traditional role of pastors preaching and teaching the congregation and have discussions; others rotate leadership among a number of individuals or groups. They acknowledge the difficulties of realizing the ideal of full participation, but they believe the struggle is necessary to maintain genuine worship. Chapter 9 continues to deal with worship while highlighting the role of creativity in worship. Emerging churches seem to attract an unusual number of artistic people, perhaps because they strongly affirm art. Many have art galleries alongside or in the places they worship, and they commonly use symbols, pictures, banners, incense, candles, images, and slides in worship. I see an increasing openness to some drama and art in traditional churches, but there are problems. Some problems Gibbs and Bolger acknowledge, such as sustainability and elitism, but there are others that they do not note or perhaps do not see as problems, such as the lack of biblical precedents for such elements in worship.

The issue of leadership is the subject of chapter 10. Emerging churches have a strong aversion to authoritarian, controlling leadership, and some have experimented with leaderless groups. Most have recognized that as an unhealthy extreme, and the more common patterns are strong congregational involvement, plurality in leadership, and representative leadership. Because so many emerging churches are small, many have no formal positions or paid leaders, and leadership often falls to those willing to lead. In any case, the preferred leaders are “servants, facilitators, and consensus builders” (p. 214). As a Baptist, I applaud the emphasis on congregational involvement and plurality in leadership. However, in Scripture there is a certain type of authority given to leaders, and leadership is not open to all but limited to those who meet certain qualifications. Some in this chapter seem to be overreacting to bad experiences with sinful leaders.

The last of the nine identifying patterns of the emerging church, stated earlier in the book as taking part “in spiritual activities” (p. 45), is fleshed out in chapter 11 as “merging ancient and contemporary spiritualities” (p. 217). The ancient aspect comes from a desire to go back to premodern expressions that avoid modern dualisms; the contemporary aspect is informed by the charismatic movement (especially in the U.K.), and spirituality is seen as a central mark of postmodern culture. The result of the merger is an eclectic blend that emphasizes the Eucharist, rituals, and liturgy; utilizes resources from Celtic and monastic spirituality; and tries to connect with contemporary culture. The key danger in their approach, acknowledged but not resolved by Gibbs and Bolger, is that of becoming “consumer oriented” (p. 229), a trait emergent churches soundly condemn in seeker churches. Another danger is the downplaying of the preaching of the Word. Modern churches, especially my own Baptist tradition, may be guilty of a lack of attention to the Eucharist, but the remedy is a better practice of the Supper, not a diminution of preaching.

Prior to the appendices, which I have already considered, a brief conclusion summarizes the main points and underscores the goal of Gibbs and Bolger in writing the book. Their role, they say, was that of “interpreter and commentator,” not censor or critic, and thus it would be unfair to fault them for not being more critical or evaluative of the emerging church. They have simply sought to present it, largely through the words of its leaders. However, there are a few matters on which the authors may fairly be questioned.

First is the issue of the criteria used in identifying emerging churches. Chris Seay, Mark Driscoll, and Erwin McManus are usually identified as leaders of the emerging church in the United States, but they were omitted from consideration here because they were seen as changing only "surface techniques" (p. 30). But this is to narrow the emerging church unnecessarily to only its more radical representatives and to imply that the only churches that take postmodern culture seriously are those that make such radical changes.

A second question is one the authors ask of themselves in the preface: "Are we critical enough?" (p. 11). On the one hand, a critique is not the purpose of this book, but, on the other hand, Gibbs and Bolger tend to give idealized descriptions of the virtues of emerging churches that often go beyond what the leaders themselves claim for their groups. Moreover, the authors seemed to downplay the struggles and difficulties the leaders described in originating and maintaining their groups.

A third question that could be asked of the authors at numerous points throughout the book is that of their fairness to existing or traditional churches. There tends to be a dichotomy of modern churches as dead, boring, passive, and stifling and emerging churches as the polar opposites. Such a false dichotomy ignores the fact that there are numerous modern, traditional churches that do not fit such a description, and some emerging churches that are struggling.

A similar question may be raised of the dichotomy of modern and postmodern. In this book, these are not neutral terms for cultures that happened to dominate at different points of time; they are not seen as equally being human creations partaking of both common grace and human fallenness. Rather, modern is bad, constricting, and a barrier to faithfully living for Jesus; postmodern is liberating, courageous, gracious, and holistic. Not only is this depiction of modern and postmodern open to question at a number of points, the effects of modernity are unhelpfully confused with the effects of sin, and the dangers of postmodernity are hardly noted.

Despite these questions, this book presents an excellent cross-section of a major portion of the emerging church, supported by thorough research and made vivid by the use of the words of dozens of emerging church leaders. The authors have done an admirable job. But what of these emerging churches? At this point, this review will go beyond evaluating the book to evaluating the churches described in the book. The portrayal of the emerging church by Gibbs and Bolger is largely positive and there is much in the emerging church to appreciate. However, three areas in these churches cause me concern. I mention them here not to attack but to call attention to areas that could use further consideration by emerging church leaders.

The first area of concern is the relative roles of Scripture and culture in the deconstruction and reconstruction of church practices. There was some mention of the kingdom, and the way of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount, but the changes advocated often seemed culture-driven and lack due consideration of whether or not there might be scriptural reasons for not going with culture at some points.

A second related area of concern is the lack of critique of postmodern culture in emerging churches. While rightly critiquing traditional churches for being warped by an unhealthy accommodation of modern culture, emerging churches have not shown a clear recognition that postmodern culture poses the same danger for them. Postmodern culture is not uniformly helpful or consistently consonant with Scripture. Areas of conflict need to be recognized and addressed.

A third area of concern is the understanding of the gospel message in emerging churches. From personal contacts with a number of emerging church leaders, I know that many preach the same gospel that traditional churches do, though they may use different language and emphasize different elements. But some of the statements cited above from chapter 6, as well as statements in other books by some in the emerging

church, raise serious questions. Clarification of their beliefs surrounding this central issue would help allay this concern.

Overall, I heartily commend this work for careful reading and study. Though it is not as inclusive as I would like it to be, and it could be more balanced on a number of points, it is by far the most comprehensive introduction to emerging churches so far available.

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Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War.
By E. Brooks Holifield. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003, 617 pp., \$37.50.

This masterful overview by E. Brooks Holifield is a major contribution to American church history. This work is comprehensive and surveys the vast landscape of theology and theologians in the ante-bellum period. The author organizes the book according to a denominational pattern, noting that theology in America is eminently denominational. The three sections of the book are divided into the following categories: Reformed thought, Baconian evidentialism, and theologians who moved away from Baconianism. The various chapters run the full gamut of sectarian doctrine while treating particularly influential individual theologians as well. For example, Holifield appropriately devotes an entire chapter to Jonathan Edwards in the first section, and the last section includes essays on Horace Bushnell and Orestes Brownson.

The overarching theme is that theology during this era was inherently practical. The author points to the centuries-old debate over whether theology is primarily practical or theoretical, a conundrum that traces its roots to the beginnings of scholasticism in the medieval era. The Reformation placed the emphasis on the practical side of theology but did not dismiss its speculative or theoretical aspects altogether. By contrast, American theology placed much more emphasis on practice than theory. The Continental Reformed roots of this debate are interesting because most of the Reformed scholastics thought that theology is both practical and speculative, that is, theology provides knowledge of God as an end in and of itself. It was Arminius and his followers who defined theology as wholly practical, and the American tradition followed the Arminian more than the Calvinist side on this foundational topic.

Several factors contributed to this development. First, most of the theologians before the American Revolution were pastors who had to preach to a congregation weekly. Second, parishioners were not interested in the esoteric aspects of theology. They were dealing with the real problem of practicing their faith in the midst of carving out a life in a rugged environment. Third, American theologians followed the lead of their counterparts in Europe who were moving toward a more pietistic thought. Fourth, the Americans were strongly influenced by Scottish common sense realism, a philosophy that was practical to its core.

However, American theologians were by no means consistent on what they meant by the term "practical," a trend that illustrates the diversity of American religious thought. The overarching notion was that theology served as a guide to lead Christians to a closer relationship with God. Within that rubric, some followed the medieval pattern of seeing theological truth as a practical guide to salvation. Others had a more restrictive view, limiting the practical nature of theology to doctrines relating to Christian living. Others restricted it still further to those teaching delivered from the pulpit that could lead one to Christ or to a more godly life.

A second major theme of the book is related to the practical nature of theology. According to Holifield, American theologians resorted consistently to an evidentialist approach to apologetics. This trend found its roots in Scottish common sense realism as well; it just made more sense to argue in favor of the resurrection than against it. The idea was the Christian religion is reasonable; the unbiased individual who looks at the evidence for and against the Christian faith would consistently rule in favor of Christianity. In other words, the evidence for Christianity demands a favorable verdict. Evidentialism had its roots in the European tradition, especially in the thought of John Locke, whose book *The Reasonableness of Christianity* served as a model for American evidentialists. American theologians followed theological developments in Europe with a keen eye.

The author notes further that evidentialism did not become an integral part of theological prolegomena until the late eighteenth century, largely in response to the increasing popularity of deism. In evidentialism, natural theology helps one to know all that is possible about God with the aid of reason. Miracles and fulfilled prophecy become the focal point and show that the Bible is true in what it affirms. There was, however, a backlash against evidentialism as found in the transcendentalists, the Mercersburg theologians, and Lutheran confessionalists. Mercersburg theologians Philip Schaff and John Nevin placed a greater emphasis on the historic doctrines of the church. The Lutherans preferred to rely on the confessions of the church rather than on external proofs and reason to support their faith. Evidences served as a comfort for those who already believed.

Holifield notes that after the American Revolution, the study of theology shifted from the parish to the academy. Furthermore, by this time theology as a discipline was becoming more specialized. In schools such as Andover, Americans followed their European counterparts in professionalizing the discipline. Faculty began to concentrate their efforts in biblical, historical, systematic and pastoral theology departments; academies furthered this specialization through the sponsorship of academic journals.

Taking the development of the theology up to the Civil War, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* is a must read for anyone interested in the development of American theology. It is so well written that I literally could not put it down. This book would also serve as an excellent text for a class in American church history. Well researched and well documented, the book has an excellent index. Unfortunately, there is no bibliography.

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Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis. Edited by Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006, xvii + 495 pp., n.p.

The history of biblical interpretation is currently a burgeoning field. In particular, evangelicals are discovering it as a way to engage Christian tradition throughout the centuries and across different ecclesial and theological streams while keeping God's revelation in Scripture front and center. InterVarsity's Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture is a prime example of this newfound interest. Nevertheless, there has been a noticeable lacuna so far—the writings of women. Marion Ann Taylor and Heather E. Weir point out that in the InterVarsity reference work *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (edited by Donald K. McKim) the only woman included is a current

scholar, Phyllis Trible. In short, the history of women commenting on Scripture has been lost, making our presentations of women's voices suffer from a limiting presentism.

In *Let Her Speak for Herself: Nineteenth-Century Women Writing on the Women of Genesis*, Taylor and Weir recover the voices of fifty women from the nineteenth century who reflected on the first book of the Bible. This laborious task of tracking down long-forgotten writings by women turns out to be good news for evangelicals. While there are Jewish authors here (some saying things that evangelicals would heartily approve) and some theologically liberal ones, the clear majority of these writers are evangelical, and many of the rest are resolutely orthodox Christians of some other variety. For example, Susan Warner structured her book *Walks from Eden* (1866) as a dialogue about specific biblical passages among members of a family. In this way, children were instructed on how to handle the dissonance of some of what they read: "We must take the facts of the Bible just as we find them; and in this matter submit to be children together before the Lord. If we do not, depend upon it we shall become fools" (p. 293). Likewise, many of the readings in this anthology contain apt and unapologetic devotional applications. For example, Lucy Barton turned the seeming trivial nature of eating the forbidden fruit into a warning about the sins that we are tempted to treat too lightly: "Have you not said in your heart, 'Where can be the harm of this little thing!'" (p. 31). The eminent novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe, in her mediation on Scripture, *Women in Sacred History* (1873), offered an invitation to discover God's provision just as Hagar did: "This little story is so universally and beautifully significant of our everyday human experience that it has almost the force of allegory. Who of us has not yielded to despairing grief, while flowing by us were unnoticed sources of consolation? . . . The narrative adds, 'Wherefore the spring was called *The Well of Him that Liveth and Seeth Me.*' That spring is still flowing by our daily path" (p. 213). Etty Woosnam used the fate of Lot's wife as an occasion for a gospel appeal: "'Two angels came to warn her.' Have you ever had any one sent to speak to you individually about your soul? Did you receive him or her as a messenger from God?" (p. 415). Though they are dead, these women can still speak to hearts and minds today.

While reading these selections, the editors ask us to keep in mind the question, "What does she see that a man might not see?" (p. 18). The general answer to this question is: "Quite a lot." Therefore it would behoove both evangelical men and women to hear the insights of past women biblical commentators. Hannah Mather Crocker, the granddaughter of the New England Puritan theologian Cotton Mather, was confident that God's plan originally was and is now on the basis of the equality of men and women: "She was reduced, from a state of honorable equality, to the mortifying state of subjection. . . . But, blessed be God, the bonds are dissolved, the snare is broken, and woman has escaped by the blessing of the gospel. . . . This, surely, must place her equal with man, under the christian system. Since the christian era, she is no longer commanded to be the slave to man, and he is no longer commanded to rule over her" (pp. 27–29). In the passage in which Abraham tells Sarah to say she is his sister and conceal that she is his wife, Elizabeth Baxter observed: "Here is the husband tempting the wife to sin. With Eve it was the wife who tempted the husband" (p. 177). Sarah Hale could see in Judah's treatment of Tamar a double standard that was still thriving in her own day: "This old man yielded at once to the temptation. When it was told Judah that his daughter-in-law had been guilty, he immediately condemned her to be brought forth and burned alive; never remembering his own sin" (p. 436).

Much of what these women commentators see that a man might not see has to do with the depth of their interest in the lives of these characters. Repeatedly, women commentators—even Jewish ones—identified with Hagar. Many read her story in the light

of suffering women in their own day, especially through the institution of slavery in America. The African American writer Eloise Alberta Bibb, in her poem, "The Expulsion of Hagar," articulated vividly what Hagar might have thought:

O Abraham! what dost thou say?—
 That I depart? I must away
 From out thy home, from out thy life!
 What words are these? canst thou be mad,
 Or do I dream? What means this strife?
 Thy love alone hast made me glad;
 O Abraham! thou hast been the light,
 Within these years of woeful night (p. 246).

If readers of this review are looking for one selection they might require students to read, I highly recommend the comments on Hagar by Elizabeth Butler. Butler was a leading evangelical social reformer. She devoted much of her life to endeavoring to help prostitutes. She saw Hagar as "the typical outcast" (p. 236). The world is "filled with Hagers" (p. 237)—with women that some man has slept with and cast out. Butler insisted that the allegorical reading of this passage offered by the apostle Paul is not the only thing that we are permitted to notice in this text: "And because the apostle made use of this incident in his passionate desire to clear away the mist of doctrinal error from the minds of his lapsed Galatian converts, and by familiar illustration to set forth the development of the purpose of God in the substitution of the covenant of Grace for the Law, shall we, therefore, speak softly of the conduct of Sarai and Abraham in this matter? I prefer to express frankly my disgust" (p. 236). Abraham did not care about the plight of Hagar, but God did: "Is it not a thought, a fact which should wake up the whole Christian world to a truer and clearer view of life as it is around us, that the first record of a direct communication from Jehovah to a woman is this of his meeting with the rejected Hagar, alone, in the wilderness? It was not with Sarah, the Princess, or any other woman, but with Hagar, the ill-used slave, that the God of heaven stooped to converse, and to whom he brought his supreme comfort and guidance. This fact has been to me a strength and consolation in confronting the most awful problem of earth, i.e., the setting apart for destruction, age after age, of a vast multitude of women" (p. 239). It is impossible to convey through a few extracts the true power and insightfulness of Butler's commentary. She paid close attention to details of the text in illuminating ways. Male biblical scholars in particular should want to hear what their female students have to say in discussions or reflection papers after they have read this selection.

It is, of course, standard fare for evangelical preachers to imagine what biblical characters must have felt and thought in their times of misfortune. As evangelical preachers are more often than not men, however, this sympathy gravitates mostly to male characters in situations upon which men typically focus, such as "career setbacks," to use modern parlance. Joseph in prison is every man who thinks he is going to be somebody but for whom things do not seem to be working out. And what minister cannot identify with Moses having to deal with a complaining congregation? In *Let Her Speak for Herself*, we hear women biblical commentators think deeply about the experiences of biblical women. What was it like for Eve to never see Cain again? Lady Sydney Morgan reflected on Gen 27:38: "'Esau lifted up his voice and wept.' Esau, the rude, the careless hunter, who had seemed to care for naught but his own pleasures; the chase, the field, the wild! He bowed down by his blind father like an infant, and wept; beseeching the blessing of which a mother and a brother's subtlety had deprived him. Could Rebekah have been a witness, or even hearer of this scene, without losing all the triumph of success, in sympathy with the anguish of her first-born?" (p. 277). Moreover, Grace

Aguilar reflected upon what it was like for Leah to be in a loveless marriage. No less poignant is Sophia Ashton's wistful comment on Eve's relationship with Adam in their unfallen state: "She alone, of all her daughters, enjoyed in its completeness, unmarred and entire, true conjugal bliss" (p. 65).

The full range of this collection is much more diverse than what has been presented so far. On the one hand, there are Victorian women biblical critics who are quite willing simply to reject the text. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, for example, declared that the Bible contains "sentiments and descriptions so gross and immoral" that it was "a pity" that they had not been left out (p. 395). On the other hand, a thirst for more standard forms of edification even from those passages that reveal biblical characters behaving badly could lead a few writers into allegorizing at its boldest. Here, for example, is Catherine Hunt Putman on Abraham's wife-sister deception: "The true relationship between Christ and the church is never understood by the *world*; it is to them a *hidden mystery*. For Jesus manifests himself to her as he does not to the world; and in their view treats her more as a *sister* than a *spouse*. Song of Solomon 4:12 'A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed'" (p. 147). Nevertheless, mostly evangelicals will recognize the moves that these biblical commentators are making as of the same kind that male evangelical commentators often do, even if these women focus their imagination, sympathy, outrage, and application in ways that men often do not.

It must be kept in mind that women commentators did not generally have the leisure to make their writings their primary work. Lydia Maria Child, for example, kept a record of her activities in the year 1864. Here is just a portion of it: "the writing of 53 articles and correcting proofs for a new book, the cooking of 360 dinners and 362 breakfasts, sweeping and dusting the sitting-room and kitchen 350 times, filling lamps 362 times, caring for sick friends and family members, making 83 items of clothing and assorted lines" (p. 4). Nevertheless, it was precisely their experience as wives and mothers that often equipped these biblical commentators to notice things in the text that male commentators might fail to observe. For example, Grace Aguilar noted in regard to Sarai: "If to Abram, being childless was a source of deep regret, it must have been still more so to her" (p. 125). Sophia Ashton affirmed that as God does not try us beyond what we can bear, he did not ask the mother to sacrifice her child. Mary L. T. Witter explained that the angel of the Lord is Christ. She also found that only the use of a female image could evoke adequately the wonderful nature of Christ's ministry: "As a tender mother would seek for a wandering child, so the angel of the Lord sought [Hagar]" (p. 249).

Let Them Speak for Themselves is a major contribution to the growing literature on the history of biblical interpretation. The editors deserve our thanks for their excellent work. This collection is the fruit of much labor. Indeed, Taylor and Weir observe that their hunt for sources turned up over a thousand volumes on Scripture by nineteenth-century women. Let us hope that they will find a way to put that bibliography in print as well. We can also hope for more anthologies from them or others concentrated on other parts of the Bible. Much has been written, for example, about the views of Jesus (and what they tell us about their authors) presented in nineteenth-century lives of Jesus. It would be illuminating to see what portraits of Jesus emerge from the writings of Victorian women. Scholars of other periods will also need to join in on this task. For example, can women's voices from the Protestant Reformation be recovered? Toward the end of this important anthology, Taylor and Weir call upon those who teach general courses on the Bible to integrate into their course requirements readings from past women biblical interpreters. I hope that readers of this journal will take up that challenge.

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Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities. By Roger E. Olson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 250 pp., \$25.00.

Rare indeed is the book that discusses traditional theological issues in a way that respects tradition yet brings fresh, constructive insight to the contemporary theological scene. Roger E. Olson's path-breaking *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* is such a book. One reason that Olson is able to bring such freshness to the Arminian-Calvinist debate is that Jacob Arminius, the progenitor of the theological system that bears his name, has been so neglected. In his revival of the theology of Arminius, Olson joins recent thinkers such as Leroy Forlines (*The Quest for Truth*) and Robert Picirilli (*Grace, Faith, Free Will*) in a return to the sources, in which Arminius is rescued from obscurity and Arminianism is rescued from some of its later historical development.

Everyone interested in evangelical theology needs to read this work. Readers from across the spectrum, Calvinists and Arminians included, will greatly benefit from it. Reading this book will help Calvinists to move beyond the caricatures of Arminianism found in Calvinistic theological literature. Arminians and other non-Calvinists will be introduced—most for the first time—to a more grace-oriented stream of Arminianism with which they were formerly unfamiliar.

In his exposition of what he calls “classical Arminianism,” Olson argues that there are some issues on which Arminians and Calvinists cannot compromise (as in “Calminianism”) and maintain the coherence of either of their systems. Yet Arminianism has much more in common with Reformed Christianity than most Calvinists realize. Indeed, Arminianism is more a development of Reformed theology than a departure from it.

Some of Olson's best passages are those in which he quotes contemporary Calvinists caricaturing Arminians and then shows how real Arminian theologians do not fit those caricatures. He is correct in criticizing, for example, the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals for excluding Arminians, though many confessional Arminians wholeheartedly agree with the Alliance's approach, except for its Calvinism. If paedobaptists and adherents of believer's baptism can work together for the mutual progress of the kingdom, Olson asks, then why can't Calvinists and Arminians? This gets back to the irresponsible ways that many well-known Calvinists characterize their Arminian brothers and sisters—associating Arminianism with heresy and liberalism and suggesting that it is closer to Roman Catholic than to Protestant theology. Olson provides numerous examples of Arminians past and present who defy such categories.

Olson contends that it is a mistake to think that free will is the guiding principle for Arminianism, when in reality free will for most Arminian theologians results necessarily from the goodness (or, for Arminius, the justice) of God. That is, they do not want to make God the author of sin, which they see divine determinism (whether direct or compatibilist) as logically doing.

Olson also dispels the notion that Arminianism does not believe in the sovereignty of God. It is not judicious, he argues, for Calvinists to define divine sovereignty in their own deterministic terms, and then suggest that Arminians do not believe in divine sovereignty just because the latter do not define it deterministically. Most sovereigns in this world have maintained rule over their realms without controlling every detail of them, Olson argues. Why must God's sovereignty be interpreted as control of every detail of reality? More importantly for Olson, the Bible does not present God's sovereignty and providence in this deterministic manner. However, it will surprise many Calvinist readers when they see how serious a doctrine of divine sovereignty was held by these traditional Arminians.

Calvinists often describe Arminianism as a human-centered theology with an optimistic anthropology. However, as Olson shows, Arminius's doctrines of original sin, total depravity, human inability, the bondage of the will, and the absolute necessity of divine

grace for salvation cannot be described as human-centered. That caricature is more the result of what Olson calls “vulgarized” American Arminianism that Jonathan Edwards encountered and Finney later popularized. Popular Calvinists also argue that Arminians cannot “give God the glory” for their salvation but take the glory themselves because their act of faith is a work. Olson shows how classical Arminian theologians argue that faith is a gift. Furthermore, a beggar simply receiving a gift from a rich man does not detract from the rich man’s glory nor give it to the beggar.

Another common myth is that predestination is a Calvinistic doctrine and that Arminians do not believe in it. Olson gives an excellent exposition of the Arminian account of election and reprobation conditioned on exhaustive divine foreknowledge of free human acts. He shows how Arminians have defended their viewpoint exegetically and how the classical Arminian approach is different from both Calvinism and open theism.

The last two chapters of the book, in my judgment, contain the most important argument of the book. In them, Olson dispels the commonly held notion that all Arminians hold views of justification and atonement that are inconsistent with those of the Reformers. He shows that it is a myth to believe that all Arminians deny the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer in justification, and that they hold the governmental view of atonement. On the contrary, many Arminians, like Arminius himself, subscribe to the penal-satisfaction theory of atonement and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to the believer as the only meritorious cause of the believer’s justification before God.

The strengths of this book are many. It is the first book ever published to survey the field of historical Arminian theology so exhaustively. Yet it does so in a way that is accessible not only to scholars but also to college and seminary students, pastors, and interested laypeople. Those looking for an exegetical-theological defense of Arminianism will not be satisfied with this book. This is not the book’s purpose. Olson’s work is historical theology at its best. He paints a picture of the theology of classical Arminians past and present. This sets certain limits for his work. He insists that he is not defending any particular Arminian viewpoint, though his views do shine through at certain points. His aim is simply to present accurately Arminian soteriology so as to correct current misunderstandings and encourage more fruitful dialogue between Calvinists and Arminians.

In compelling and readable prose, Olson ranges over a great deal of territory. He discusses Arminius, the Remonstrants Simon Episcopius and Philip Limborch, John Wesley, nineteenth-century Wesleyan theologians such as Richard Watson, William Burton Pope, Thomas Summers, and John Miley, as well as twentieth-century and contemporary Arminians such as H. Orton Wiley, Thomas Oden, F. Leroy Forlines, Jack C. Cottrell, and H. Ray Dunning. He also makes frequent use of two fine dissertations recently written by John Mark Hicks and William G. Witt.

Olson cogently makes several important points that will add significantly to the discussion of Arminianism and that recent works in Arminian theology have not adequately discussed. For example, he clears up the misunderstanding of Arminianism as semi-Pelagianism by discussing Arminius’s disavowal of the label and the latter’s theological reasons for vigorously distancing himself from semi-Pelagianism. His terminology that the act of faith is the free “non-resistance” to the drawing power of the Holy Spirit is valuable.

Olson correctly speaks of individual election as the classical Arminian view. According to this perspective, the New Testament speaks of a personal election of individuals to salvation based on divine foreknowledge of them in their believing status. His emphasis that, for Arminius and other classical Arminians, this is individual election as opposed to corporate election is a welcome change to the overwhelming view of corporate

election among contemporary Arminians. In this way, Olson echoes recent grace-oriented Arminians such as Oden, Forlines, and Picirilli. Corporate election, according to classical Arminians, is the unconditional election of the church as the people of God. Individual election is the personal election of believers to salvation.

Olson accurately describes Arminius as a covenant theologian. This should gain the attention of traditional Reformed thinkers, who tend to be friendlier with Calvinist Dispensationalists than with non-Calvinists who share approaches to the covenants and eschatology that are closer to Reformed views.

Moreover, Olson states clearly that classical Arminianism is completely different from open theism, because the former demands absolute divine foreknowledge of future free contingents for its entire system of predestination to cohere. He is also to be commended for discerning that Arminius did not accept middle knowledge. Olson cogently argues that the idea of middle knowledge results in just another kind of divine determinism. Thus, it does not help the Arminian cause but in essence is incompatible with libertarian free will. He correctly says that the classical Arminian contends that middle knowledge is illogical because the concept of counterfactuals of freedom is illogical.

Though this is an excellent book, I do have a few criticisms. These are mostly inter-necine Arminian issues but are extremely important to the core argument that Olson is making. The first criticism is that Olson is vague on certain details that seem to mitigate the points he is trying to make in getting Calvinists to reconsider Arminianism. Perhaps this is because he is attempting to present a united front for evangelical Arminians.

As one example of this vagueness, Olson seems to minimize the distinctions between Arminius and later types of Arminianism, particularly Wesleyanism, in some places. Wesleyan Arminian theologians tend to take the view that either Christ's atonement or the drawing power of the Holy Spirit (or both—the reader is left confused over which it is) reverses inherited guilt (p. 33) or even releases all people from the condemnation for Adam's sin (p. 34). Olson seems to disagree with this, but he leaves too many loose ends for those Arminians who want to follow Arminius more stringently. Arminius simply believed that original sin, total depravity, and inherited guilt are the lot of all those born into the human race, and the Holy Spirit draws them individually by his grace. Thus, he would have disagreed with what Stephen M. Ashby has called the "scattergun" Wesleyan approach to grace. This view seems to aver that Christ's atonement automatically renders the will free, rather than the Holy Spirit's convicting power applied in his own time to individual sinners' hearts and minds. Olson would no doubt agree, but he would have done well to have made this clearer. Calvinist authors like Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams, whose book *Why I Am Not an Arminian* Olson cites, are right to think that this view would mean that "in Arminian theology nobody is actually depraved! Depravity and bondage of the will is [*sic*] only hypothetical and not actual" (p. 154). Furthermore, one might wish that Olson had spent more time talking about how most Arminians after Arminius have differed with him on the imputation of Adam's sin to the race, a Reformed view that Arminius vigorously upheld.

Another place where one might wish for more clarity is Olson's discussion of prevenient grace as partially regenerative. He argues that classical Arminians see those under the sway of prevenient grace as partially but not completely regenerated. Thus, there is an "intermediate stage" between being completely unregenerate and fully regenerated, when the will is "freed to respond to the good news of redemption in Christ" (p. 164). Most Arminian theologians will be ill at ease with this concept, preferring to say that that saving faith logically precedes regeneration in the *ordo salutis*. Obvious related questions are, "Why is prevenient grace necessary if Christ's atonement reverses inherited guilt and releases people from the condemnation for Adam's sin? Would this not mitigate total depravity, rendering prevenient grace superfluous?"

As a second criticism, many Arminians, with Calvinists, will be uncomfortable with Olson's view that divine love is the "guiding vision" of Arminian theology (pp. 72–73). They, along with Arminius, would say that God's justice or holiness is the guiding vision in Arminianism as much as in Calvinism. This is the view of recent Arminians such as Forlines, Oden, and Picirilli.

Third, Olson is quite clear that classical Arminianism is incompatible with open theism and that he disagrees with the latter. Still, traditional Arminians will be concerned about Olson's footnote regarding open theism: "I consider open theism a legitimate evangelical and Arminian option even though I have not yet adopted it as my own perspective" (p. 198, n. 65).

For the fourth criticism, a few comments are in order regarding Olson's treatment of justification and atonement in Arminianism. Olson correctly notes that Wesleyans in the nineteenth century and afterward have disagreed with the imputation of the righteousness of Christ as the sole meritorious cause of the believer's justification and the concomitant penal-satisfaction doctrine of atonement. He states clearly that he regrets this development and prefers the contemporary Wesleyan theologian Thomas Oden's approach, which defends both these doctrines. The difficulty is that Olson seems to hope fondly that these doctrines are not at the core of Wesleyan Arminianism and that Wesleyans can choose between the mainstream Wesleyan view and Oden's view. This hope seems to root itself in one of the few profound misunderstandings in Olson's entire book: Wesley's doctrines of atonement and justification.

While Wesley uses imputational language in his discussion of justification, he falls far short of a Reformed understanding of the imputation of Christ's righteousness as the meritorious cause of the believer's justification before God. Furthermore, Wesley melds satisfaction and governmental motifs in his doctrine of atonement, arguing that Christ's death atones only for the believer's past sins. Thus, Olson's interpretation of Wesley's views on atonement and justification is flawed. This likely accounts for what seems to be his hope that Wesleyans can recover from these theological views by going back to Wesley himself.

One historiographical criticism may account for why Olson misunderstands Wesley: the only period of Arminian theology of which Olson does not take account is seventeenth-century English Arminianism. Yet this is the most crucial period for the development of subsequent (largely Wesleyan) Arminian thought. In other words, seventeenth-century English Arminianism, from the Arminian Puritan John Goodwin to thinkers such as Jeremy Taylor and Henry Hammond of the Anglican "Holy Living" school, provided the context for Wesley's development of his Arminianism. These are the people he read and studied and re-published, not Arminius. Understanding the historical context of Wesley's soteriological development would have helped Olson's treatment. Yet it makes clearer the divide that really does exist between Reformed theology (as well as Arminius) and Wesleyan theology on such issues as the actual total depravity (in the here-and-now) of sinners, the satisfaction view of atonement, and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.

Finally, Olson fails to deal with sanctification and perseverance. Perhaps this is because he wants to bring together all non-Calvinists in a united voice against the determinism, unconditional predestination, and limited atonement of classical Calvinism (a noble aim and something that needs to be done). Dealing with these issues would have shown the consequences of many Arminians not believing in the imputation of Christ's righteousness and the satisfaction view of atonement: that is, a belief in the possibility of entire sanctification or sinless perfection, which dovetails with the notion that only past sins are forgiven and hence one can lose salvation by committing acts of sin and regain it by repenting. Olson fails to deal with these crucial doctrines, repeating the mistaken view that Arminius is not really sure if once-regenerate people can lose their

salvation. On the contrary, Arminius believed that one can “decline from salvation,” but only by “declining from belief.” Arminius reinforced this view again and again when he made statements that not all believers are elect—that the elect are only those regenerate individuals who *persevere* in belief until the end of life. Those who do not continue in belief have, by that unbelief, committed the sin against the Holy Spirit and cannot be renewed to salvation.

Despite these criticisms, if Olson’s purpose is to provide a united front for all non-Calvinists, help Calvinists get past their unfair caricatures of Arminian theology, and help breathe new life into the Calvinist-Arminian debate, then he has fulfilled his purpose grandly. Olson says that, while Calvinists and Arminians, like paedobaptists and adherents of believer’s baptism, will have a difficult time being members of the same congregations, they can do great things together for evangelical theology and the kingdom of God. One hopes that this view can be reflected in reality, and I believe that *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* can play a significant role in making it so.

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The Baptist Way: Distinctives of a Baptist Church. By R. Stanton Norman. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2005, vii + 212 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Within the church, ecclesiology is now a featured theological issue for the early twenty-first century. As the church wrestles with matters related to cultural and moral shifts, kingdom expansion, and the attempt to maintain a biblical response to the question, “What is the church?,” Norman’s work has arrived at just the right moment, especially for Southern Baptists in particular and Baptists in general. The author serves as director for the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry and as Associate Professor of Theology at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

This work is actually the second phase of Norman’s writings on Baptist distinctives. Following his publication of *More Than Just a Name: Preserving Our Baptist Identity* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001), in which he examined historical writings on Baptist distinctives (e.g. contributions by E. Y. Mullins, H. Wheeler Robinson), *The Baptist Way* is “an attempt to identify and describe the distinctive traits of Baptists and thus is more prescriptive than descriptive in nature” (p. 9). The author is quick to note that this work has three limitations. First, because the focus of the work is on the theological tenets that have been historically regarded as Baptist characteristics, this book is not a “full-fledged ecclesiology” (p. 10). Second, though the work does contain numerous citations from scholarly sources, Norman confesses that he has written this work for the church and not the academy. He readily admits that his book is more of a primer than a detailed analysis. Finally, though this work will appeal to a wide audience, Norman notes that his primary audience are those individuals affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention.

The heart of this work consists of eight chapters, each addressing a clear distinctive of Baptist churches. Though Norman notes that other churches and denominations will find some or even significant agreement with many of these eight distinctives, he particularly attempts to address how each of these beliefs are uniquely Baptist. For him, “To misrepresent or modify the tenets that historically have distinguished the Baptists is to belittle the labor and sacrifice of those who have preceded us. In addition, to redefine the essence of our Baptist identity destroys the foundation of the association of our Baptist churches” (p. 9).

In chapter one, Norman discusses the tenet of biblical authority. Here he explains the different sources for religious authority that can be found in a variety of non-Christian and Christian circles. For Baptists, the Scriptures are supposed to stand above church tradition and human wisdom as the source of authority. Chapter two addresses the Lordship of Jesus Christ, with Norman examining the heritage of the sovereignty of Christ and its relationship to and effect on Baptist ecclesiology. Chapter three treats the principle of regenerate church membership. Norman shows the connection between this biblical teaching and the baptism of believers, or those who can understand the gospel, repent of their sins and make a credible profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Chapter four addresses church discipline. The occasion, procedure, and purpose for discipline are discussed. Chapter five is dedicated to congregational polity, “the way a local church organizes and administers its ministries in the quest of its mission” (p. 85). Norman explains what is meant by the fact that a Baptist church is democratic, then traces the connection between the priesthood of the believer and local church autonomy with pastoral leadership. The unique contribution of chapter six, “Related Church Concerns,” is Norman’s explanation of the local church covenant in Baptist identity. Chapter seven examines the two ordinances of a Baptist church, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. Finally, chapter eight addresses religious liberty and its connection with soul competency, the belief that people have an inalienable right of direct access to God.

Norman’s book contains numerous strengths, of which I will list a few. First, this work offers an excellent overview of what it has historically meant to be a Baptist; it is indeed a primer for Baptist distinctives. One is hard pressed to find another easy-to-read yet concise work that offers both quantity and substance related to the Baptist heritage. Second, Norman offers clear biblical evidence for each of the Baptist distinctives. He shows that historically Baptists have believed as they do because of certain biblical prescriptions rather than church tradition or human speculation. Third, he attempts to show the community nature of the church and how the practice of contemporary radical individualism in many churches is contrary to the Scriptures. Fourth, and closely related to the aforementioned strength, is the fact that Norman shows how belief in the priesthood of all Christians is connected to ecclesiology and to be practiced primarily in the context of the Body of Christ, rather than as an excuse for not being faithful to one’s local church membership.

Despite the numerous strengths of this work, a couple of limitations appear. First, in Norman’s attempt to show the Baptist connection to the New Testament for authority, he appears to de-emphasize the value of the Old Testament to a negative degree. He states, “The New Testament is for Baptists the sole authority and preeminent standard. This conviction serves as the essential distinctive for our theological identity. The ultimate test for any teaching in Christianity is its agreement with the revelation of the New Testament because in it Christ’s authority is most clearly revealed” (p. 25). Granted, the New Testament has more information regarding ecclesiological issues, but the reader must not forget that a healthy New Testament theology can only be constructed upon the foundation of a healthy Old Testament theology. A theology professor may assume this latter statement, but the non-theologically trained reader will probably fail to see the connection. Furthermore, one’s decision about the continuity and discontinuity between the Old and New Testaments will definitively determine one’s ecclesiological orientation and theological method for constructing a doctrine of the church.

Second, in his chapter on religious freedom, Norman fails to discuss the biblical paradigm—preaching the gospel to unbelievers—for lasting societal transformation. Rather, he emphasizes three prominent Baptist leaders in colonial America—John Clarke, Isaac Backus, and John Leland—and their approaches to fighting for religious liberty. The methods of these men are then labeled as three models for cultural engagement. Though he shows historically how Baptists have stood up for their rights and religious liberty (and should continue to do so), Norman needs to remind his readers that

the weight of the biblical evidence is upon the church taking the gospel of the kingdom to unbelievers for enduring societal transformation. For Baptists, evangelism is and must be the primary activity for cultural engagement and lasting transformation. I believe that Norman's overemphasis on a Backus-Leland approach has a strong tendency to sidetrack many contemporary Baptists with the political processes of the kingdom of the United States, as they believe that the common U. S. political action methodology offers a more excellent way to transform society than does the gospel of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings who rules now and forevermore.

I highly recommend this work to those interested in Baptists distinctives. It will appeal to both the theologically and non-theologically trained. Baptist church leaders should especially consider using this book in their churches. Norman has written an excellent work that will be of value to many, especially to the Southern Baptist Convention. I plan to recommend his work to all of my students.

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An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches. By Ray S. Anderson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 236 pp., n.p. paper.

Numerous on-going discussions concerning the emerging church and its association with postmodern culture are taking place today. Several books concerning the emerging church focus on the practices of various churches within this movement, but few set out to describe or define a theology for emerging churches. In *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches*, Ray Anderson has attempted to present such a biblical theology.

Ray S. Anderson is senior professor of theology and ministry at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, CA. He has written over twenty books, including *Living the Spiritually Balanced Life*, *The Soul of God*, and *Theological Foundations for Ministry*. He is also the contributing editor for the *Journal of Psychology and Theology* and has had articles and reviews published in many journals, including *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, *Calvin Theological Journal*, and the *International Journal of Systematic Theology*. Anderson enters the emerging conversation as an "interlocutor" with a background in practical theology who was "provoked" by those within the emerging church movement to provide "a creative and constructive theological paradigm for the emerging church movement" (pp. 10–11).

Anderson states his thesis as follows: "The Christian community that emerged out of Antioch constitutes the original form and theology of the emerging church as contrasted with the believing community at Jerusalem" (p. 20). Working from this thesis, he defines "emergent church" as "the first-century emerging church at Antioch, including the various churches that came into existence through Paul's ministry based in Antioch" (p. 10). He then defines "emerging churches" as the diverse churches that are attempting to operate within contemporary (postmodern) culture.

After his introduction, Anderson explains that the differences between the churches in Antioch and Jerusalem were not merely geographical; they were theological. The Jerusalem church based its theology on religion and was "committed to historical precedent, crippled by religious scruple, and controlled by a fortress mentality" (p. 25). In contrast, Paul and the Antioch church based its theology on revelation: Jesus continued to reveal himself, his will, and his mission to the church through the Spirit.

Anderson divides the book into nine chapters, with each chapter distinguishing between an aspect of the church in Antioch and an aspect of the church in Jerusalem. In chapter two, he contrasts the confessional nature of the Jerusalem church as

represented by Peter's confession "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God," with the Antioch church that "depend[ed] on a personal knowledge of Christ" (p. 43). The church in Antioch recognized that its Christianity must be embedded in truth and in the person of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. In chapter three, Anderson guides emerging churches toward the Spirit, not just spirituality. This follows from his conviction that the church in Antioch relied on the Spirit rather than the structures of the church in Jerusalem. Chapter four describes how the Antioch church focused on the "right gospel" as opposed to the Jerusalem church, which cared more about polity and its tradition within Judaism. In chapter five, Anderson describes how the church in Jerusalem sought to build the kingdom, while the believers in Antioch experienced and expressed the kingdom in their lives. In chapter 6, he suggests that Barnabas encouraged Paul to become the resident theologian for Antioch. He then contrasts Jerusalem's emphasis on obeying the law in the Word of God with Antioch's emphasis on seeing God work through them. Similarly, chapter seven portrays the Jerusalem church as attempting to keep the letter of the law, while the Antioch church lived the law of love and the law of the Spirit. In chapter eight, Anderson applauds the Antioch church for living as a community of the Spirit, not for seeking the gifts of the Spirit. He states, "Gifts of the Spirit are not for the purpose of making the Spirit visible but to make the body healthy and fully functioning" (p. 160). He maintains that the Jerusalem church, on the other hand, focused on recognizing the gifts of the Spirit. In chapter nine, Anderson says that emerging churches, like the emergent church of Antioch, are about mission, not just ministry. He suggests that Jerusalem majored on ministry instead, to the detriment of Jesus' commission. In the final chapter, Anderson contends that the Jerusalem church looked back toward Moses and the historical Jesus, while the Antioch church was eschatological, looking forward "to know Jesus of Nazareth first of all as one coming to [them] from the future rather than from the past" (p. 204).

I offer the following points of critique: First, Anderson presents a definition of "emergent" that is different from the accepted definition of the word within emerging churches. Within the emerging church movement, the term "emergent" suggests a connection to the Emergent Village and its website: www.emergentvillage.com. Emergent represents one part of the emerging church movement. In *Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Postmodern Cultures* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), Gibbs and Bolger (colleagues of Anderson) describe the rise of "Emergent" toward the end of the 1990s: "[P]ostmodernity continued to be a main topic for the Young Leaders Network, which morphed into the Terra Nova Theological Project and which later became Emergent" (p. 32). Because the term "emergent" is already defined within the emerging church movement, Anderson's re-definition may lead to confusion. In fact, the title *An Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches* led me to misunderstand this book as presenting the theology of the Emergent Village and those associated with that group. While Anderson clearly explains his definition of "emergent" within the book, he would have caused less confusion by using a different term.

Second, Anderson bases his thesis on a particular interpretation of certain biblical passages and how they relate together, highlighted by his view that the church in Jerusalem and its leaders separated from the church in Antioch and Paul. For example, he contrasts the grace of Paul and the emerging church in Antioch with the legalism of the leaders of the Jerusalem church. He argues, "The law-centered religion of Jerusalem sought to contain the new messianic communities of believers within the traditions of Moses" (p. 140). While Scripture does indicate that some from Judea taught believers in Antioch to keep the law (Acts 15:1) and that Peter refused to eat with the Gentiles after some men came from James (Gal 2:12), these passages do not indicate a split between the leaders of the church of Jerusalem and those of the church of Antioch. Furthermore, at no point does Scripture condone those who taught that Gentile believers must keep

the law. Instead, according to Luke, during the Jerusalem Council both Peter and James (leaders in the church in Jerusalem; Gal 2:9) *agreed* with Paul (from the church of Antioch; Acts 13:1) that God had accepted the Gentiles by faith and not by keeping the law (Acts 15:7–21). Similarly, Paul records that Peter did eat with Gentiles before the men came from James, and that Peter himself lived as a Gentile and not as a Jew (Gal 2:12–14). Instead of indicating that the leaders of the church in Jerusalem required believers to keep the law, these passages indicate that Peter and James accepted the Gentiles as brothers in Christ apart from circumcision and keeping the law. While some Jewish believers within the church in Jerusalem may have attempted to force the law on Gentile believers, the leaders of the Jerusalem church did not. Instead, they agreed with Paul that both Jews and Gentiles are “saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 15:11).

Third, and similarly, Anderson draws a sharp distinction between the beliefs and practices of the church in Jerusalem and the church in Antioch. For example he states, “The church at Antioch was formed and existed only by the Spirit, unlike the church at Jerusalem that had a built-in structure to rest on” (p. 69). Elements of this structure included the twelve apostles, elders, continuity with Judaism, a temple, and synagogues. In reality, however, all of these structures (except the temple) did exist within the churches of Antioch and Paul. As another example, Anderson suggests that the church in Jerusalem operated based on the letter of the law, while the church in Antioch operated on the law of love. However, both John and James, whom Paul recognized as leaders in the Jerusalem church (Gal 2:9), stated that the law of love is primary (James 2:8; 1 John 4:21). Even Peter, another leader of the church in Jerusalem, encouraged believers towards love in several passages (1 Pet 1:22; 2:17; 3:8; 4:8). Finally, Paul exhorted churches to imitate the church in Jerusalem, not the church in Antioch (1 Thess 2:14). From these examples, there does not appear to be a schism between the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch, nor does there appear to be any substantive difference in belief or practice between the two groups.

Together with these points of critique, I offer commendation for the book’s many strengths. First, if the emerging church movement is an ecclesiological movement adapting to postmodernism, then the movement must have a basis for its ecclesiology. Many within the movement select ecclesiological practices and emphases because they resonate with postmodern culture. As an alternative, Anderson uses his premise to attract emerging churches and their leaders to a *biblical* theology and ecclesiology. He wants the contemporary emerging churches to see themselves in the emergent church of Antioch so that they can develop their theology from Antioch and Paul, instead of from culture. Because many within the movement perceive themselves as emerging from modernism and evangelicalism, the attraction to Antioch and its theology would be stronger if Antioch emerged from Jerusalem in a similar manner. Anderson selectively uses the biblical text in order to set forth this emergence. Still, while his premise may be faulty, Anderson’s biblical theology is valuable to emerging churches. He presents a combination of theology and practice that is both grounded in Scripture and also significant for postmoderns. For example, Anderson suggests a theology based on Christ, the kingdom of God, the community of the Spirit, and mission, four themes that echo the results of Gibbs and Bolger’s recent survey of emerging church leaders. Because of this, Anderson does provide a context for emerging churches to “find their ecclesial form and their core theology” (p. 20). So, instead of trying to accomplish this purpose by constructing a schism between the churches of Jerusalem and Antioch, he should have just focused on what most of the book demonstrates: the concerns of the emerging church are scriptural concerns for all churches.

Second, Anderson emphasizes other themes that any church would do well to understand and practice. As he rightly demonstrates, Scripture calls believers to live in the

presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit, concerning themselves with the right gospel instead of the right polity. Likewise, all believers need a theology that includes both the word of God and the work of God as they live as part of the kingdom of God. Moreover, as Anderson points out, the Spirit does not desire to produce gifted individuals as an end in itself, but instead desires to grow a healthy community with vibrant relationships between believers and God. In these instances and others, Anderson presents a biblical theology and ecclesiology that is valuable for churches within any cultural context.

The major difficulty in reading Anderson's book is in separating his conclusions from his premise concerning the schism between Jerusalem and Antioch. Fortunately, his conclusions do not primarily flow from his premise; they flow from Scripture. He uses his premise primarily as an attractive element for emerging churches. The benefits of a biblical theology for emerging churches in our contemporary culture outweigh the negative impact of his premise.

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