

BOOK REVIEWS

Holy Bible: New Living Translation. Wheaton: Tyndale, 1996, 1 + 1289 pp. + maps, \$19.99.*

With some reluctance I agreed to review the OT portion of the New Living Translation (NLT). My disdain for its predecessor, the Living Bible (LB), and my personal preference for a more literal translation philosophy over a thoroughly dynamic equivalence approach no doubt makes me, from the start, prejudiced against any overtly thought-for-thought translation (though the NLT, as it turns out, is not always consistently thought for thought). But when I saw the names of the revisers, a virtual *Who's Who* of evangelical OT scholarship, I became more positively disposed. The following represents my impressions after investigating a sampling of OT passages in comparison with the older edition and with the NIV, with which it will primarily compete for market share.

The original Living Bible was produced in the 1960s and early 1970s by Kenneth Taylor, who took the American Standard Version of 1901 (not the Greek NT or the Hebrew OT) and rephrased it in his own words to bring out what he understood as the meaning. It was claimed that Greek and Hebrew “experts” checked the content, though to most scholarly reviewers these experts improved the work at most superficially. In contrast, the NLT no longer claims to be a mere paraphrase by a single author but a genuine translation by an international team of evangelical scholars based in the OT on the *BHS* Hebrew text.

The NLT is clearly an improvement over the LB. Taylor’s text did serve as the basis of revision, and much of the wording remains unchanged. Taylor himself was on the translation committee as a “special reviewer.” Nonetheless the revisers have made changes in virtually every verse, and the book of Psalms in particular is so thoroughly revised as to be regarded as a new rendition. The vast majority of these changes have only served to improve the work.

The LB was notorious for its midrashic interpretative glosses. These were often based on Taylor’s imagination and his desire to make the text more vivid and meaningful, but they lacked any basis in the original. These, thankfully, have disappeared. For instance, the baseless “All day long he sat on the hillsides watching the sheep and keeping them from straying” (Amos 1:1), “Don’t be afraid” (Isa 40:9), “Cyrus” (Isa 41:5) and the like are all gone. Gone too are many of the anachronisms (except in weights and measures), so that whereas the LB read in Ps 119:105 “Thy word is a flashlight for my feet” the NLT once again reads “a lamp.” The “police” of Cant 3:3 (LB) are now

* The publication by a mainstream evangelical publisher of a major new Bible translation/revision warrants a more in-depth review than *JETS* normally publishes. Accordingly three reviews follow, focusing respectively on the OT, the NT and the overall literary quality of the New Living Translation. The reviewers are specialists in each of these areas: Joe M. Sprinkle, associate professor of Old Testament at Toccoa Falls College; Mark L. Strauss, assistant professor of New Testament at Bethel Theological Seminary West; and Norman Carson, professor of English emeritus at Geneva College. The reviews have been edited for format and consistency, but overlaps among them have been allowed to stand.

once again “watchmen” (NLT). To the laughable renderings based on an ignorance of the Hebrew, such as the LB’s “Do not awaken my lover; let him sleep” (Cant 2:7), the NLT now gives reasonable interpretation (“Do not awaken love till the time is right”).

In addition, the interpretative paraphrases are generally much more cautious. Ecclesiastes is no longer explicitly written by “Solomon of Jerusalem, King David’s Son” as the LB claimed. The male voice in Song of Songs is now a “Young Man” rather than “Solomon.” Both these modifications reflect scholarly evangelical reservations concerning Taylor’s previous views and a concern not to stray so far beyond what the text actually states. The angel interpretation of Gen 6:1–3 had been explicit in the LB (“beings from the spirit world”), but the NLT renders with the more ambiguous and pedestrian “sons of God.” The “tree of conscience” (Gen 2:17, LB) is now again the “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” (NLT). The specific (and probably wrong) interpretation of 2 Kgs 3:27 that after seeing the king of Moab sacrifice his son as a human offering “the army of Israel turned back in disgust to their own land” (LB) is now replaced by the more literal but somewhat ambiguous “The anger against Israel was so great, they withdrew and returned to their own land” (NLT).

On the other hand, this translation is in some ways more bold than the older edition. It contains perhaps the most explicitly erotic rendering of Song of Songs of any major translation available, reflecting the scholarly trend to read the Song primarily as love poetry. The LB’s “palace” (1:4) that the feminine voice was brought into is now the young man’s “bedroom.” The veiled woman of 1:7 is no longer called a “vagabond” (LB) but the sexually charged term “prostitute.” The “beloved one” (male) who lies between the girl’s breasts is now the girl’s “lover” (1:13), and the young man and she now lie together on the grass, rather than just she alone (1:16). The young woman brings her lover not merely “into my mother’s old bedroom” (LB) but “into my mother’s bedroom where I had been conceived” (3:4, NLT), a sexually suggestive rendering. Although the translators admit in a marginal note that the Hebrew is ambiguous, the NLT renders 6:12 with the explicitly erotic “Before I realized it, I found myself in my princely bed with my beloved one.” No longer is “love awakened” (LB) under the apple tree, but the young woman says to the young man, “I aroused you under the apple tree” (8:5, NLT). The metaphor of the young sister who is likened to a “wall” or to a “door” is paraphrased as meaning “chaste” and “promiscuous” (8:9). The NIV, in comparison, is more reserved: “chambers” instead of “bedroom” (1:4), “veiled woman” for “prostitute” (1:7), “our bed is verdant” for “we lie together in the grass” (1:16), “royal chariots” for “princely bed” (6:12), “roused you” (i.e. from sleep) for “aroused you” sexually (8:5), and “wall” and “door” (8:9).

The NLT OT, though based primarily on the MT, does indulge in some textual criticism. Hence at Gen 4:8 the expression “Let us go out into the fields” is adopted from the versions, but unfortunately no note indicates that this reading deviates from the MT. At Jer 27:1 Jehoiakim is corrected to Zedekiah, though this change is explained in a note. Goliath is still more than nine feet tall in this version, though the footnote explains that in the Greek version (and it should add the text of the Dead Sea scrolls) Goliath is the still large but less colossal 6.75 feet tall. No mention is made of the widely adopted reading “light” in Isa 53:11 (LXX, 1QIs^a), but 52:14 changes “you” to “him” on the basis of the Syriac. Psalm 22:16 retains the traditional rendering based on LXX, Syriac and some Hebrew MSS—“They have pierced my hands and my feet”—without a hint that this rendering is problematic and not based on the MT (cf. NIV fn., which observes that most Hebrew MSS read “like a lion” rather than “they have pierced”).

It is estimated that as much as one third to one half of the OT is poetic. It is therefore most unfortunate that the NLT regularly fails to print in poetic format many pas-

sages universally regarded as poetic in Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and many portions of the prophets. A significant exception was made for the entire book of Psalms, which is written in poetic format. Other exceptions were made where the text explicitly calls what follows a "song" or "psalm," for prayers, and for certain riddles, blessings and poetic quotations (e.g. Gen 14:19–20; chap. 49; Exodus 15; Num 6:24–26; chaps. 23–24; Deuteronomy 32–33; Josh 10:12; Judges 5; 14:14; 15:16; 1 Sam 2:1–10; Isa 5:1–7). In an improvement over the LB, the bicolon structure of various Proverbs in the NLT have been restored so that anyone who wanted to could read them as poetry. Still, it is regrettable that all the poetic portions were not laid out as poetry. It may be true that laypeople do not much care for poetry, but they should be allowed to know when they are reading poetry and when they are not, since this affects interpretation. This decision sets this translation back more than two centuries, before the seminal work of Robert Lowth on Hebrew poetry.

In this age of political correctness, it is both understandable and regrettable that new translations are obliged to make concessions to the feminist encroachments upon the English language. In Paul's spirit of being a Jew to the Jew and a Greek to the Greek, one arguably should be a feminist to the feminist. No one wants to create an unnecessary offense to hearing the gospel or God's word. Thus "man is like the grass" is now "people are like the grass" (Isa 40:6); the "sons of Israel" are now "Israelites"; the "son" addressed in Proverbs 1–9 is now a "child." In most of these cases, the change is unobjectionable. The last of these is problematic, however, since the text goes on to discuss the temptations the "child" will face from immoral women. Thus the NLT is constrained to be inconsistent and revert back to the literal "son" in Proverbs 5, since clearly a pubescent male is being addressed. From this it appears clear that the pubescent male was the original audience throughout this part of Proverbs, and hence the generic term "child" doubly misleads, connoting an individual too young and introducing an anachronism in concession to feminist sensitivities. The NLT does not, however, go as far as the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) in striving for gender-neutral language, and pronouns describing God are all, as far as I have seen, in the masculine. The revisers of the NIV, on the other hand, have recently backed away from plans to introduce more gender neutrality in its revision due to strong opposition from some conservative Christians.

Genesis 1–2 illustrates some strengths and weaknesses of the NLT in comparison with the NIV. The NLT, unlike the NIV, includes as an alternative rendering in the margin the philologically possible (if less likely) rendering of 1:1 as a dependent clause: "When God began to create." In 1:2 the NIV margin includes the gap theory's rendering "became" as an alternative for "was"; the NLT rightly ignores this alternative. The NIV's more literal "and there was evening, and there was morning" is much better than the NLT's flawed rendering: "This all happened." The NLT's rendering not only destroys the poetry of the original but also obscures the extended anthropomorphic metaphor of God as the ideal workman creating the world over the course of a human workweek, a metaphor in which God, like a human worker, is portrayed as taking a break from evening to morning. It also renders unintelligible Judaism's rationale for beginning each day at sundown rather than dawn. The poetry of 1:27 is retained and printed as such, but the chiasmic parallelism of 2:4 and the poetry of 2:23–24 is not represented.

On the more positive side, there are a number of places in Genesis 1–2 where the NLT's renderings seem to improve on the NIV. The NLT's rendering of 1:9b as a purpose clause ("so dry land may appear") is to be preferred over the NIV's literal rendering of it as a coordinating clause ("and let the dry land appear"). The NLT's "small animals" is more elegant than the NIV's more literal "creatures that move along the

ground" (1:24). The rendering of "people" (margin, "man") in the image of God in 1:26 avoids the misinterpretation that only males are in God's image that the NIV's "man" allows to the careless reader and makes clear that *ʿādām* is here a collective for mankind, though "people" garbles the verbal connection with Adam/the man in chaps. 2–3. The NLT's "grain" in 2:5 is more accurate than "plant" in the NIV, and in 2:9 "beautiful trees that produced delicious fruit" is certainly more elegant than the NIV's literal "trees that were pleasing to the eyes and good for food."

Of special interest to evangelicals is the treatment of passages traditionally understood as messianic. In general, the NLT gives a mixture of traditionalist and nontraditionalist renderings of such passages. In Isa 7:14, the Immanuel passage, *hā'almā* is rendered "the virgin," though unlike the NIV the NLT margin notes the philologically attractive alternative rendering "young woman." In 9:6 "he shall be called" (NIV) is paraphrased as "his royal titles shall be," and the margin notes (as does the NIV fn.) that "Wonderful Counselor" could be punctuated "Wonderful, Counselor." Daniel 3:25, where the fourth man in the fiery furnace looked according to the KJV like "the Son of God," is rightly rendered instead "like a divine being" (fn. "like a son of the gods"). Haggai 2:7, "the desired of all nations will come" (NIV), traditionally understood as referring to the Messiah whom the nations desire, is more accurately rendered by the NLT "the treasures of all the nations will come."

In some passages, references to the Messiah are capitalized (e.g. Jer 23:5; Zech 3:8; 6:12 ["Branch"]), whereas in others they are not ("servant" in the servant songs in Isaiah). Daniel 9:25 capitalizes "Anointed One," though the margin reads "anointed one" without capitalization (probably a nonmessianic alternative in reference to Onias III). In Dan 7:13 the traditional "one like a son of man" (NIV) is rendered by the NLT "someone who looked like a man," which rightly catches the contrast with the "beasts" earlier in the chapter, but the margin adds the capitalized reading "Son of Man" that makes the messianic interpretation explicit. Similarly Ps 2:7 reads "You are my son" without capitalizing "son," thereby implying a reference to the historical kings of Judah and not just the Messiah, but the margin offers the capitalized "Son," the traditionalist understanding.

Psalms 2:7 helpfully makes clear the change of speakers: "The king proclaims the Lord's decree." To the traditional rendering "Your throne, O God, endures forever" (45:6) the NLT adds the alternative in the margin, "Your divine throne," a rendering that wreaks havoc with the quotation of this verse in Heb 1:8.

The expression "you will not abandon my soul to Sheol" (Ps 16:10) is rendered by the NLT "you will not leave my soul among the dead" (cf. NIV "you will not abandon me in the grave"), though the soul-body dichotomy implied by the NLT is dubious. The NIV, in a decision that sparked some controversy, regularly renders *šē'ōl* as "the grave." The NLT usually does so also (cf. Ps 6:5), though it also uses "place of the dead," "death" or a similar term (Isa 14:9, 15) when it is not altogether omitted via paraphrase. Like the NIV, the NLT rightly avoids the translation "hell" when rendering *šē'ōl*, though the idea of "nether world" may be implied in Isa 57:9; Jonah 2:2 by the rendering "the world of the dead."

What is clear from my preliminary perusal of the NLT OT is that despite the various criticisms given above the NLT, unlike the LB, cannot be dismissed as completely lacking in scholarly merit and accuracy. It is instead a serious and legitimate translation worthy of consulting alongside others in our attempt to ascertain the meaning of the text. The NLT OT contains many fine renderings that improve on existing translations. On the other hand, the translators for most books suffered under the burden of having to revise a paraphrase rather than being free to render a completely fresh translation according to their best judgment. Moreover NLT's translation philos-

ophy, though much improved over the LB, remains overly paraphrastic for my tastes. Finally, the NLT's treatment of many poetic passages outside of the Psalms is fundamentally flawed. For these reasons, in the OT I would recommend the NIV over the NLT as the layperson's primary Bible.

Joe M. Sprinkle
Toccoa Falls College, Toccoa Falls, GA

The NLT is the long-awaited revision of the LB, which appeared more than 25 years ago. In many ways the NLT is a whole new translation. While the LB was the work of a single translator, the NLT is a committee work involving some 90 evangelical scholars from various theological backgrounds. The list of translators is impressive—practically a *Who's Who* of evangelical Biblical scholarship. Advances in linguistics have been significant since the LB first began appearing in the early 1960s, and the NLT draws significantly on these advances. Though many individual phrases of the LB are retained, many passages are entirely rewritten and few verses remain untouched.

In a helpful introduction the NLT sets out its translation philosophy and methodology. While the original LB was called a paraphrase, the NLT identifies itself as a dynamic equivalent translation—a thought-for-thought translation that seeks the closest natural equivalent in the receptor language. The goal is to have “the same impact on the modern readers as the original had on its own audience.” The intentional shift from paraphrase to dynamic equivalence is evident in the revision of verses like John 1:1. Whereas the LB read “Before anything else existed, there was Christ,” the NLT retains both the allusion to Gen 1:1 and the significant Christological title “the Word”: “In the beginning, the Word already existed.” While the LB exhibited considerable textual inconsistency, the NLT follows the standard Greek and Hebrew editions: *BHS* for the OT, and *UBSGNT*⁴ and *Nestle-Aland*²⁷ for the NT.

In most specifics the NLT is a typical dynamic equivalent translation, rendering weights, measures, currency, dates and times in understandable English equivalents. Greek and Hebrew idioms such as “they beat their breasts” are translated either dynamically (“they went home in deep sorrow”) or are clarified with an expanded translation (“they beat their breasts in sorrow”). Significantly the NLT (like the NRSV, the Contemporary English Version [CEV] and others) adopts gender-inclusive or gender-neutral language whenever possible. For example, when *anthropos* is used generically it is rendered as “human being,” “person” or a similar equivalent, and *adelphoi* is variously rendered as “dear friends,” “believers,” “Christians,” etc. (I have been informed in a letter from Mark Taylor, president of Tyndale House Publishers, that in new printings of the NLT *adelphoi* will be more consistently translated as “brothers and sisters,” thus retaining the familial sense of the original.) Generic phrases such as “no man” become “no one” or “anyone.” These changes are meant to reflect contemporary English usage and so to render more accurately the meaning of the original. There is no attempt, however, to render God-language in a gender-neutral manner.

Footnotes are judiciously used throughout, especially to identify OT quotations in the NT, more literal Greek or Hebrew renderings, and significant textual and interpretational variants. For example, in 1 Tim 3:8 the text reads “wives of the deacons,” with a footnote giving the alternate rendering “women deacons” and explaining that the Greek word can mean either “women” or “wives.” Similarly, for the very difficult “women will be saved through childbearing” in 1 Tim 2:15 a footnote offers two

alternatives: “will be saved by accepting their role as mothers” and “will be saved by the birth of the Child.” When a more literal Greek rendering might be helpful to the reader it is often included. The requirement of an elder to “be faithful to his wife” in 1 Tim 3:2 is footnoted “Greek *be the husband of one wife*.” There are also occasional historical and cultural clarifications in the footnotes. Since the modern reader might confuse “Asia” in Acts 16:19 with the continent, a footnote helpfully clarifies that it is “a Roman province in what is now western Turkey.” These footnotes represent a great improvement over those provided in the LB, which were inconsistent and sometimes inaccurate.

The NLT like its predecessor is a delight to read and, as its name suggests, often brings to life with clarity and simplicity passages that sound cumbersome in more literal translations. 1 Corinthians 6:18 is obscure in most modern translations: “All other sins a man commits are outside his body” (NIV). The NLT retains the LB translation: “No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does.” Romans 3:3 sounds stilted in most modern translations: “What if some were unfaithful? Will their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?” (NRSV). The NLT (following the LB) reads “just because they broke their promises, does that mean God will break his promises?”

Like the LB, the NLT uses everyday language for technical theological terms such as “justification,” “sanctification,” “propitiation.” 1 Corinthians 7:14, traditionally rendered “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife” (NASB), appears as “For the Christian wife brings holiness to her marriage.” “Therefore having been justified by faith” (Rom 5:1, NASB) becomes “Therefore since we have been made right in God’s sight by faith.”

Particularly impressive is the sensitivity to context found in many passages. For example, Luke 1:26 helpfully clarifies that it was in “the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy” that Gabriel was sent to Mary (NIV, NRSV, NASB, etc., simply read “in the sixth month”). Luke 4:23 makes clear the most likely connection between Jesus’ two sayings in the Nazareth sermon: “Physician, heal yourself”—meaning, “Why don’t you do miracles here in your hometown like those you did in Capernaum?” In the Lukan birth narrative Joseph is identified as “a descendant of King David” (1:27, cf. 2:4), and Jesus is “a mighty Savior from the royal line of his servant David” (1:69 [following the LB]). This latter rendering is far more clear to most readers than “a horn of salvation . . . in the house of his servant David” (NIV), and it also helps to clarify the messianic significance of Jesus’ Davidic ancestry (cf. 1:32–33). These passages more accurately bring out the thought of the original author. There are sometimes helpful clarifications of the Greek. The second-person plural pronoun, usually rendered simply “you,” is clarified as plural in 1 Cor 3:16: “Don’t you know that all of you together are the temple of God?”

The LB was often criticized for occasional chatty and unsuitable language. The NLT has corrected references such as “Barney the Preacher” in Acts 4:36 (LB) and smoothed the offensive “you son of a bitch!” in 1 Sam 20:30 (LB; cf. John 9:34). Many anachronisms in the LB, like “flashlight” (Ps 119:105; NLT: “lamp”) and “Israeli army” (1 Sam 4:1; NLT: “Israelite”), have been corrected. I must admit, however, that I do miss “the young prophets of Bethel Seminary” in 2 Kgs 2:3 (LB)! The NLT has “the group of prophets from Bethel.”

The primary weakness of the NLT is the inconsistencies it exhibits. There are occasional lapses in the dynamic equivalent method. One wonders whether “chosen by lot” (Luke 1:9) and “laid in a manger” (2:7) are appropriate in contemporary English. In the former case the helpful explanatory footnote in the LB is dropped. I was also surprised to find that little Bethlehem is identified as the “city” of David (2:11)—especially since the introduction to the NLT uses the term “city” as an example of a Bib-

lical word that is often more appropriately rendered as “town” or “village.” At other times the language appears more paraphrastic than necessary. In 3:16 John the Baptist says simply, “I am not worthy to be his slave.” The vivid imagery of a slave stooping to remove his master’s sandals is lost (though it is footnoted). Occasionally the dynamic rendering is simply odd. 1 Corinthians 9:4 reads: “Don’t we have a right to live in your homes and share your meals?” (for the Greek “to eat and to drink”). The idea of support and hospitality now sounds like an unwanted house guest setting up residence. The original LB was better: “the privilege . . . of being a guest in your homes.” At times the absence of a footnote identifying variant interpretations is surprising. Though “fiancée” (NLT) is probably the most widely accepted interpretation of the “virgin” in 1 Cor 7:36, one would expect so disputed a passage to have alternate interpretations in the margin.

Despite these occasional lapses, the NLT is a significant improvement in accuracy and consistency over the LB while retaining its clarity and readability. If the amazing success through the years of the LB is any indication, the NLT should gain a wide readership and should find a significant place among the growing number of dynamic equivalent translations available today.

Mark Strauss
Bethel Theological Seminary West, San Diego, CA

The publishers of the NLT describe their translation as “accurate, easy to read, and excellent for study.” Furthermore, “thoughts (rather than just words)” are put into “natural, everyday English” by combining “the latest in scholarship with the best in translation style” (p. xxxix). Let us look, then, at two central matters: (1) whether the new translation does or does not demonstrate “natural, everyday English” and exemplary style, and (2) how it thus compares with its predecessor, the LB.

Two caveats are in order here. To examine the English of this translation thoroughly, making the necessary comparisons with its predecessor, one should read both Bibles throughout. Because of time and space constraints I have based my evaluation on a random choice of passages. More importantly, although the original languages inevitably have much to do with the choices made in the English language text I have made no attempt to determine the accuracy of the translation. This is the province of those whose reviews appear above.

My selections include narrative (Genesis 1; 2 Chronicles 32–33); poetry (Proverbs 27; Isaiah 60; Psalms 23, 67, 128; Matt 5:2–12; Luke 1:46–55); visionary and apocalyptic expression (Daniel 10; Zechariah 5; Rev 7:11–17); Jesus’ didactic and parabolic statements (Mark 4:26–32; John 6:35–40; John 15); Pauline expression (Rom 8:31–39; 1 Corinthians 13); and the styles of Peter (1 Pet 2:4–7), Jude (Jude 24–25) and the writer to the Hebrews (Heb 12:18–24). These selections allow one to examine the cadences of both simple and emotionally charged prose, of the rhythms and images of poetry, and of literal and figurative language. I include some of the most familiar passages of Scripture.

It was the purpose of those responsible for the LB to produce a paraphrase, “expanding where necessary for a clear understanding by the modern reader” (LB Preface). Such paraphrasing, however, often resulted in a style less than felicitous, one that even at times grated on the ear. The NLT, however, emphasizes the use of the dynamic equivalence theory of translation as close as possible in the style of the receptor language to that of the “original-language text” (p. xli). This changed emphasis results

in a text often more concentrated than that of the earlier translation, more appealing to the ear, and it produces a text that returns to more traditional theological expressions rejected by the LB in favor of clarity or readability. Nevertheless one discovers in the NLT that numerous instances of amplification still are present.

The Bible begins with the rich cadences of Hebrew prose, so influential on modern writers as diverse as Whitman, Faulkner and Ginsberg. The NLT returns in part to that style—for example, from “When God began creating the heavens and the earth” (LB) to “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (NLT). In some measure the beauty of the cadence is restored. Also the gender-inclusive style, found throughout the NLT, is cast in poetic form in Gen 1:27:

So God created people in his own image;
God patterned them after himself;
male and female he created them.

In Gen 1:25, however, the NLT also adds to the LB—namely, from “made all sorts” (LB) to “each able to reproduce more of its own kind” (NLT). The former is an example of the pedestrian prose of the LB, the latter an example of explication actually destroying the cadence of the passage.

The translators of the NLT state that they “did not feel obligated to display all Hebrew poetry in English poetic form,” that, except for the book of Psalms, “other books, though poetic in nature, are set in prose for the sake of easier reading” (p. xliii). The NLT translators’ claim that even the prose rendering is close to the original poetic rendering appears to be borne out for the most part. By comparison the style of LB is wooden, and the diction, while presumably more modern, often approaches the level of slang.

In the NLT we see the return to a more felicitous cadence of poetry by comparing the two versions in Prov 27:3–4:

The rebel’s frustrations are heavier than sand and rocks. Jealousy is more dangerous and cruel than anger (LB).

A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but the resentment caused by a fool is heavier than both. Anger is cruel, and wrath is like a flood, but who can survive the destructiveness of jealousy? (NLT).

The rhythmic cadence of the NLT version is obvious. It is also a nearer approximation of the more literal KJV, NASB and NIV translations.

Comparing the poetic diction affords telling examples of the difference between the LB and the NLT.

- Ps 23:3b: He helps me do what honors him the most (LB).
 He guides me along right paths, / bringing honor to his name (NLT).
- 23:4c: Guarding, guiding all the way (LB).
 Your rod and your staff / protect and comfort me (NLT).
- 128:3a: Your wife shall be contented in your home (LB).
 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine, / flourishing within your home (NLT).
- Prov 27:7: Even honey seems tasteless to a man who is full; but if he is hungry, he’ll eat anything! (LB)
 Honey seems tasteless to a person who is full, but even bitter food tastes sweet to the hungry (NLT).
- 27:18a: A workman may eat from the orchard he tends (LB).
 Workers who tend a fig tree are allowed to eat its fruit (NLT).

In these examples we see that the NLT restores both the figurative language and concrete detail of the text, enlivening the passage (e.g. “guides me along right paths” for “helps me do”; “like a fruitful vine” for “contented”; “bitter food” for “anything”; “fig tree” for “orchard”). Also, as we see in Ps 23:4, the NLT necessarily expands the text to restore the lively and accurate rendering of the Hebrew. Evidently the NLT translators thought the contemporary reader perfectly capable of understanding the ideas of fruitful vines, rods and staffs.

The two translations show less diversity in the prophetic and apocalyptic passages than elsewhere, although the character of paraphrase in the LB shows itself in some passages. For example, in Dan 10:7 the LB’s “suddenly filled with unreasoning terror” is reduced to “suddenly terrified,” and in 10:14 “the Jews” is eliminated altogether, its “at the end times” is changed to “in the future,” and its “fulfillment of this prophecy” is reduced to “this vision.”

Does the NT show similar differences? The NLT sets Matt 5:3–10 in poetic form, but the language gains little in the new translation. In v. 3 the straightforward “Humble men are very fortunate” (LB) becomes “God blesses those who realize their need for him” (NLT). The literal Greek “poor in spirit” may still puzzle the modern reader, but neither of these renderings adds significant beauty in English—perhaps an insoluble problem for the translator. Neither the NIV nor the New King James Version (NKJV) alters the traditional rendering of this verse. Mary’s Magnificat stands largely unchanged from traditional renderings in the NLT, as does the parable of the sower (Mark 4:26–32). In John 15 something of the old cadence and richness of style returns in Jesus’ description of the vine:

- V. 4: Take care to live in me, and let me live in you (LB).
 Remain in me, and I will remain in you (NLT).
- V. 5c: For apart from me you can’t do a thing (LB).
 For apart from me you can do nothing (NLT).

The NIV rendering here is almost exactly that of the NLT, whereas the NKJV retains a bit more of the Elizabethan diction.

1 Corinthians 13 may offer the clearest example of the extent to which the NLT differs from the LB. Here the NLT is sometimes the more expansive translation, even though it usually works the other way around. Four examples will have to suffice.

- V. 1b: I would be only making noise (LB).
 I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a
 clanging cymbal (NLT).
- V. 3a: burned alive for preaching the gospel (LB).
 sacrificed my body (NLT).
- V. 7: If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost.
 You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and
 always stand your ground in defending him (LB).
 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures
 through every circumstance (NLT).
- V. 12a: In the same way, we can see and understand only a little about God
 now, as if we were peering at his reflection in a poor mirror (LB).
 Now we see things imperfectly as in a poor mirror (NLT).

These passages also offer some notable contrasts to the NIV and NKJV versions. For example, the NKJV retains “sounding brass” for “gong,” “bears all things” for

“never gives up,” and “hopes all things” for “is always hopeful.” Here the advantage of clarity and felicity of style goes to the NLT. The NIV gives us “surrender my body to the flames” for “sacrificed my body” (NLT). In this instance the fire imagery of the NIV is to be preferred as the more effective rendering.

Despite a continuing tendency to flatten the cadences of the Hebrew and Greek in the service of clarity, the NLT represents a clear advance over the LB. The translators’ willingness to employ figurative language rather than pedestrian explication is to be commended. So are their improvements in diction, their willingness to credit the modern reader with a modicum of theological sophistication, their resisting the use both of the slangy argot of the common reader and the bare-bones, lowest-common-denominator expression. These improvements provide us with a translation that is both clear and attractive. While the imagery and cadence may not yet appeal to the eye and ear in the way some translations do, the NLT deserves an unbiased reading.

Norman Carson
Geneva College, Beaver Falls, PA

Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel. By David Garland. New York: Crossroad, 1993, 269 pp., \$27.50.

Reading Matthew is the fourth volume in a new commentary series, edited by Charles Talbert, that stresses literary and cultural approaches to the NT corpus. Two interests drive this volume. (1) Garland believes that Matthew’s central goal is to “tell the story of . . . Jesus’ life and teaching.” Like other contemporary “lives” the first gospel tells selective anecdotes chosen to illumine the nature of a great man. Specifically, Garland maintains that Matthew resembles the lives used in philosophical schools to present the teaching of their founder (p. 6). (2) Garland asserts that Matthew came from a Hellenized Jewish Christian church, perhaps Antioch. This fuels the commentary’s extensive and illuminating use of historical backgrounds from Greek, Roman and Jewish sources, which proves to be its greatest strength.

For example, the discussion on oaths (5:33–37) cites parallel and disjunctive teaching from the OT, Josephus, Philo, Qumran and the Mishna (pp. 70–72). Parallels from pagan and rabbinic literature make brief remarks on the Lord’s prayer (pp. 78–81) genuinely informative for the average reader. Garland uses his materials with sensitivity, alternately explaining the similarities and dissimilarities between Jesus and his milieu. For example, commenting on Jesus’ miracles he outlines the difference between rabbinic miracles and Jesus’ miracles: Jesus heals by a word, at a distance; Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa only prays for healing and waits for God to grant fluency to his requests (pp. 94–97).

Unfortunately, since *Reading Matthew* is brief, the space given to backgrounds is taken from traditional linguistic and historical exposition. Some discussions leave many questions unanswered and are simply too brief to be illuminating (e.g. pp. 193–195, the parable of the unforgiving servant). More than once, a brief explication lists a few exegetical options, offers terse pros and cons and leaves significant questions unresolved (e.g. pp. 85–86, casting pearls before swine). Garland’s brevity is especially striking in the miracle narratives. The commentary on the feeding of the 5,000 (14:13–36) and the resurrection (28:1–10) receive about one page each. Though the volume claims to be a theological commentary, matters such as the implications of Jesus’ miracles for Matthew’s Christology are scarcely noticed (pp. 102–103, on the healing of the paralytic). The relative disinterest in narrative may not be caused by

doubts about Matthew's historicity, a matter Garland typically skirts. He calls Matt 17:24–27 "a whimsical fish story" (p. 186) but ordinarily shows an apparently respectful silence toward miracle narratives, including the resurrection.

Other standard commentary fare is also missing. Though written for "upper level undergraduates, seminarians and seminary educated pastors," *Reading Matthew* interacts with the Greek text rarely and briefly, principally to comment on vocabulary rather than grammar, syntax or poetic structures. Notes on traditional introductory questions are also brief. Garland considers the author and occasion of Matthew to be unknown, prefers a date past AD 70, and names Mark and Q as Matthew's chief sources, but stakes almost nothing on the points.

Reading Matthew is very good at one thing: providing and analyzing literary parallels to Matthew. If you seek that one thing, buy this book; otherwise build your library in other ways.

Daniel Doriani
Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

All Things Are Possible to Believers: Reflections on the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount. By Rudolf Schnackenburg. Translated by J. S. Currie. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995, 102 pp., \$12.99 paper.

This brief treatment by the emeritus professor of NT at the University of Würzburg depends upon two central theses. First, the Lord's prayer is the enactment of Jesus' own bold trust in God as exemplified in his *logion* from the pericope on the healing of the paralyzed boy: "All things are possible to the one who believes." Second, the Lord's prayer is the key to the intention of the sermon on the mount. Thus Schnackenburg concludes that believers today must mimic the bold trust of Jesus as they seek to enact the high standards of the sermon on the mount in a world marred by wars, misuse of possessions, widespread poverty and oppression, and blatant sexual impurity. Those who believe that "all things are possible" can accept and fulfill the rigorous demands of the sermon on the mount.

Part 1 of the book contains three sketches on the sermon on the mount. These concern the history of its interpretation, its original meaning, and its implications for Christians today. Part 2 engages the Lord's prayer from three perspectives: a structural overview, a discussion of God and his kingdom in the first three petitions, and a presentation of the emphasis on abiding human needs in the final three petitions. Schnackenburg believes that the authentic voice of the historical Jesus may be found in this material, though he demurs affirming that the present context and structure are dominical.

One's view of the value of this book will depend upon his/her evaluation of the two central theses mentioned above. The author's view that the saying from the healing of the paralyzed boy is the key to Jesus' central ethical discourse is at least debatable. I could also wish that the discussion was less sketchy. Readers who are familiar with Schnackenburg's magisterial volumes on the gospel of John may be disappointed here. However, the book does provide a helpful introduction to some of the major issues that are confronted by those who wish to exegete and apply this choice discourse of our Lord.

David L. Turner
Grand Rapids Baptist Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

Leadership and Discipleship. A Study of Luke 22:24–30. By Peter K. Nelson. SBLDS 138. Atlanta: Scholars, 1994, xvii + 330 pp., \$21.95 paper.

Peter K. Nelson's doctoral thesis, supervised by John Nolland at Trinity College, Bristol, offers a thorough examination of the disputation of the disciples at the last supper and Jesus' comments regarding greatness and reward (Luke 22:24–30).

The book is divided into two major sections. In the first Nelson deals with literary and sociological backgrounds relevant to a last supper. Here also he examines authority and subordination in the ancient world. Nelson notes the hierarchical nature of ancient societies and the widespread phenomenon of patronage in society and family. Also in the first section is a discussion of "table motifs"—that is, the role of meals as communal events in which teaching and fellowship occurred. Nelson observes that the table conventions tended to affirm social status and that Luke's Jesus was iconoclastic at table (he ate with sinners, for example). In the penultimate chapter of the first section Nelson deals with "reversal motifs" in classical, Jewish and NT literature. He notes that reversals are common but not of a piece: Some involve 180-degree turns, others 360-degree turns. Clearly Luke 22:24–30 depicts the latter. Finally, Nelson provides a useful survey of "testamentary genre" as a background to Jesus' comments in Luke 22:24–30.

The second major section of the book is an extended exegetical treatment of the passage in which virtually every term is examined in some detail. Readers will probably not be surprised by Nelson's findings. As he himself suggests, his contribution lies in providing a more extensive analysis than others have (p. 239).

Among the strengths of the book, one might note that here we have an exhaustive exegetical treatment of the passage at hand, a treatment that illuminates the text, particularly when taking into account the background materials surveyed in the first section. The author is familiar with and makes use of a wealth of secondary literature and, indeed, his work is probably now the most exhaustive single treatment of this pericope. The summary at the end of each chapter pulls together the substance of Nelson's argument. There appear to be few typographical errors.

The review would be incomplete, however, were it to fail to mention any reservations about Nelson's work. There are really only two criticisms of consequence. Nelson seems to argue that the disciples were fundamentally misguided in their concern about greatness: "Jesus admonishes the Twelve to make a downturn from their interest in greatness and adopt the status of servants" (p. 76). "Attention to the flow of contrasts in vv 26b–27 thus reveals that the prizing of greatness is precisely what Jesus opposes, and he does so by command and reference to his own example of service" (p. 136). It seems to me that Jesus does not denigrate the disciples' wish to be great, only their understanding of how that greatness is to be achieved—that is, they are to become great (ὁ μείζων ἐν ὑμῖν γινέσθω) through serving (Luke 22:26) rather than by "lording" (κυριεύω) authority, as do the kings. Thus, Jesus stands the conventional notion about greatness and the means of achieving it on its head—and this seems to be the main thrust of his remarks. Nelson hints at this interpretation in places (e.g. "though the Lukan Jesus may envision a profound reformation of the idea of greatness and leadership, he does not call for its elimination," p. 156), but his earlier statements left me with some doubt about what his final opinion was.

A second criticism has to do with his use of redaction criticism. Nelson believes that Luke 22:28–30 and Matt 19:28 are both rooted in Q and that Matthew is more primitive; from this he argues that we can know what Luke did with Q (and so discern his "distinctive" meaning) by comparing Luke with Matthew—but, of course, Matthew is not Q and so, from Matthew, we can know (though, as experience teaches, we may speculate) neither what Q says nor what Luke has done with it. Similarly, Nelson ar-

gues that Luke 22:24–27 is probably not dependent on Mark 10:41–45 but may follow a tradition much like that of Mark's source (not an indefensible position). He then goes on to state that Mark "will be used with considerable caution . . . [for] it provides a ray of indirect light for the interpretation of Luke 22:24–27 and will need to be consulted periodically in the quest to discern the meaning of Luke's text" (p. 131). If he means that we can use Mark to discern Luke's meaning in the sense of learning how Luke treated sources compared with Mark, we might ask how we can use Mark's gospel to illuminate Luke's treatment of sources when we do not really know what Mark did with his source, nor, for that matter, what the source said in the first place. Misgivings aside, for those interested in a verse-by-verse appraisal of Luke 22:24–30 this is a useful work.

Brent Kinman
Beeson Divinity School, Birmingham, AL

The Narrative Function of the Holy Spirit as a Character in Luke-Acts. By William H. Shepherd, Jr. SBLDS 147. Atlanta: Scholars, 1994, viii + 290 pp., \$22.95 paper.

This dissertation was written under the supervision of Fred B. Craddock and accepted by Emory University in 1993.

In his introduction Shepherd surveys scholarly work on the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts and calls theologically driven analysis of narrative into question. Chapter 2 provides an extensive, helpful review of critical theories on character and characterization in narrative. The next two chapters (which comprise more than half of the book) track down all Lukan texts that make reference to the Spirit and analyze them to see how the Spirit functions and is characterized (chap. 3 on Luke, chap. 4 on Acts). The final chapter succinctly restates and draws conclusions from the main findings of the work.

Shepherd maintains that the Holy Spirit is best understood as a character in the Lukan narrative, an onstage actor who proves the faithfulness of the offstage God. Luke-Acts may be regarded as an apology for the reliability of God in which the Spirit's narrative function is to provide readers with needed assurance. Neither the resistance of some Jews to the gospel (Shepherd rightly notes that Luke does not portray the mission to Jews as being over or a failure) nor the advance of the Gentile mission undermines God's credibility.

Shepherd argues that the major contribution of previous scholarship on the Holy Spirit in Luke-Acts has been the recognition that Luke's portrayal is in continuity with the OT Spirit of prophecy: It empowers people for witness. Shepherd also notes, however, that there is little agreement about the Lukan Spirit beyond this point, and that is because we have been reading Luke-Acts chiefly to uncover the author's theological conception rather than to appreciate its qualities as a narrative.

A shortcoming of Shepherd's work is that his reading of Luke-Acts, although focusing on literary features, is itself directed toward the theological point that the Spirit in Luke-Acts underscores the reliability of God; indeed, Shepherd's work resonates with much scholarship on the "plan" of God in Luke-Acts. This seems to be at odds with his critique of previous scholarship.

Shepherd's attention to the function of the Spirit as a character in Luke-Acts muddies the water of his work in that one is not told whether his meticulous analysis is an effort to recover Luke's conscious literary intention, to reflect on conventional literary expectations of Luke's first readers (or their psychological structures?), or to achieve some other end. After so much talk of function one wants to ask, "Function for

whom?" Readers engage creatively with texts to fill gaps, build consistency, and make sense of the puzzle, thus leaving outcomes unpredictable. How then can one propose definite findings as to the Spirit's function in Luke's narrative? On what basis do we prefer one analysis of a character's function over another analysis? Shepherd does not say.

On the whole, however, this work represents a good effort to respect the literary quality of Luke-Acts and to keep theological reflection from overrunning the reading process. Those who study the Spirit in Luke-Acts and the relation between narrative and theology will want to have access to Shepherd's book.

Peter K. Nelson

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Studying John: Approaches to the Fourth Gospel. By John Ashton. Oxford: Clarendon, 1994, 226 pp., \$45.00.

John Ashton, University lecturer in New Testament studies at Wolfson College, Oxford, offers here a few of the many possible approaches that might be fruitfully adopted in studying the gospel of John. Some of the material appeared in "compressed form" in Ashton's earlier volume *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, while the much larger part comprises fresh and challenging insights respecting this Johannine contribution and its critics.

In eight highly detailed chapters, Ashton challenges the assumptions of methodologies that ignore the historical contextualization of the fourth gospel, defends the historical-critical school of thought as a stance, and exposes some of the theoretical weaknesses that he finds in much recent scholarship on this Biblical book. No superficial judge, the author proposes thoughtful alternatives to any position he deems seriously flawed.

The first two chapters treat in greater depth than *Understanding* the concerns of the prologue and of those identified as "the Jews." Respecting the prologue, Ashton maintains that "the first place to look for the source of any particular element in the Fourth Gospel is in the Jewish Christianity where the Gospel took its rise." His priority accorded the Jewish wisdom tradition counters Dodd, Käsemann and Lindars, who, he says, lean too heavily on Hellenistic parallels. As to the identification of "the Jews," Ashton reviews the copious literature on the subject, dividing his time between theories exegetical and historical in nature, positing them first as Judeans generally and then as the religious establishment particularly.

In chap. 3 the author addresses this question: "How did the [Johannine] community move from the low christology of the messianic signs-source to the high christology that was to determine its departure from the synagogue?" Contra Bultmann, Ashton again affirms the roots of the gospel to be Jewish and answers his question in terms of a "bridge" that somehow leads back to the Danielic Son of Man.

Chapter 4 treats the matter of the most long-lived of all Johannine source theories, the signs-source. Ashton here discusses the existence, extent, reconstruction and purpose of such a source. The best of several evidences is 20:30, but even accepting the viability of a signs-source hypothesis one must conclude that such is virtually irrecoverable and thus of no practical use in exegesis.

In the fifth chapter Ashton argues for the continuity of John 9 and 10, determining that the healing of the blind man in chap. 9 marks a turning point in the history of the Johannine community. No longer is it a marginalized group, maintaining only a

tenuous relationship with the center, but a severed and self-sufficient entity, a church. The introduction of the shepherd metaphor in chap. 10 stresses the consequences of that fateful break with the synagogue (cf. Ezek 34:6, 11, 16, 23).

The remaining chapters present the case that narrative criticism is more "a fad than a fashion," yielding "trifling if not altogether illusory" results and having little if any place in the interpretation of the fourth gospel (chaps. 6 and 7; the latter returns to John's prologue as a case in point). The conclusion to the whole is largely a defense of the aims and methods of historical criticism (chap. 8), which he traces back generally to Thucydides, but in Biblical studies to the European Enlightenment. According to Ashton, Bultmann and Dodd are among the "best practitioners" of the historical-critical method so crucial to an understanding of the fourth gospel.

Two criticisms: (1) Too often Ashton concludes a substantive thought with a dismissive "but this case cannot be argued here" (e.g. pp. 165, 166). Why not? (2) He perceives an "instinctive distaste of conservative scholars for anything that smacks of literary reconstruction" (p. 91). Not so!

This present collection of essays and extensive bibliography is tough and serious fare, appropriate to the scholar, teacher, and scholarly pastor.

Donald N. Bowdle
Lee College, Cleveland, TN

The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting. Vol. 3: Paul in Roman Custody. By Brian Rapske. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994, viii + 512 pp., \$37.50.

This study by the senior pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Vancouver, BC, is a full and careful treatment of every aspect of historical background that impacts the understanding of Paul's imprisonment. The background to the study was a dissertation done under Ruth Edwards at the University of Aberdeen. Thus the study shares the quality of other works from Aberdeen with its care for detail and full interaction with current discussion.

The major task of the study is to work its way through the various aspects of ancient imprisonment. This ranges from topics like the nature of custody in the Roman world and the role of the magistrate in the proceedings to Paul's citizenship and Paul's various imprisonments in Philippi, Jerusalem, Caesarea and Rome. Beyond this there is a careful consideration of ancient prison conditions, prison culture, how being chained was viewed, what prison life was like and what kind of help a prisoner could and could not expect. There also is careful consideration of parallels (or, better, the lack of them) for Paul's miraculous release from prison.

Rapske's method is to pick a topic and work through its background by citing and summarizing the ancient texts that discuss the setting in question. This he does very well. The book literally is loaded with references to ancient material, making it a superb resource for information on ancient imprisonment. Particularly telling is the description of the squalid conditions some prisoners faced, a fact that brings fresh appreciation for the nature of Paul's suffering for the Lord at certain times. Though the exception, on occasion Rapske discusses a topic and indicates knowledge of a parallel but fails to discuss it (e.g. pp. 117, 120 n. 31, 197). This might frustrate a little at points the reader who does not have direct access to these sources.

Rapske's major thesis is that this background helps us to appreciate Luke's defense of Paul. It is in discussing the role of these texts for the theological message of Luke that the work is not as strong as in its historical points. Is it Paul who is

defended as an individual or is he presented as an example of the outreach to Gentiles, which is Luke's real topic? In other words, is Paul being defended or what Paul represents? Given the role of the final section of Acts in the totality of Luke-Acts, it might well be the latter. It is hard to understand how the gospel of Luke as a whole prepares for a defense of the Pauline mission if he alone is the point of the defense. Another clue to Paul presented as an exemplary figure who perseveres are all the exhortations in the gospel to disciples to cling fast to the Word even in the face of persecution. Thus it may be that Paul is not the point, but the proclamation of the Word of God with boldness in the face of opposition, something that might strengthen Theophilus' resolve by seeing the character of the Pauline witness. Thus some more consideration of how the portrait of Paul fits into the whole of Luke-Acts could have made the concluding chapter stronger.

There is much here to commend. Almost any question of detail about how trials and imprisonment worked can be answered by finding the correct section and working one's way through it. Interpretive disputes are handled fairly and crisply. In addition, the different character of the various imprisonments is judiciously dealt with, as are the reasons for delay in deciding Paul's case and the reason why he raised his citizenship at a seemingly awkward point. The delay was grounded in his desire to follow through on his primary identity as a Christian.

The nature of the topic makes it a difficult one on which to write, and the book is probably better used as a resource volume as one considers various issues in the imprisonment of Paul than a volume to be read through. It is packed with information that is hard to digest otherwise. In sum, this study is a thorough treatment of a key period of Paul's life and an important phase of Luke-Acts. It illuminates the realities Paul faced in vivid detail but is less helpful in getting us to the role of this section of Luke-Acts. Nonetheless, the volume has an important role in filling a major hole in our understanding of Paul the prisoner.

Darrell L. Bock
Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, TX

The Book of Acts in Its First Century Setting. Vol. 4: *The Book of Acts in Its Palestinian Setting*. Edited by Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids/Carlisle: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1995, xiv + 526 pp., \$37.50.

The fact that over half of the narrative of Acts occurs in Palestine is reason enough for devoting a volume in a series focusing on the first-century setting of Acts to its Palestinian milieu. The fifteen contributions range far and wide over archeological, literary and epigraphic evidence, illustrating well the collaborative cross-disciplinary approach adopted in previous volumes in this series.

In the lead contribution T. Rajak argues that the distinction between Jews and Greeks in Acts and Josephus is more notional than real (chap. 1). This resonant polarity is a constructed reality employed when polemically convenient but easily discarded when a more integrated picture is necessary. D. W. J. Gill describes the changing and unstable Roman political situation in Judea during which the events in Acts take place and highlights the way governors sought either to win the support of the Jewish elite or to control the province by force (chap. 2). In a close examination of the Palestinian Jewish onomasticon, M. H. Williams highlights how political factors, especially the dream of a Hasmonaean-style fight for freedom, influenced the selection of names in procuratorial Palestine (chap. 4). Arguing that the early Church was

culturally, socially and economically pluralistic from the beginning, D. A. Fiensy locates the activity of the Jerusalem church in the cenacle (the traditional site of the upper room) of the upper city, the Hellenistic synagogues in the lower city, and the temple (chap. 7). According to J. Murphy-O'Connor, archeological, textual and circumstantial evidence supports the authenticity of the cenacle as the first assembly place of the church in Jerusalem (chap. 10). E. Bammel shows how the portrayal of Jewish juridical activity against Christians in Palestine serves to convey the impartiality of the Romans (chap. 12). Reading Peter's activities in Lydda (Acts 9:32–35), conduct that may be described in halakhic terms as those of a *mēsīt*, J. Schwartz proposes that the rabbinic Ben Stada Lod tradition represents a Jewish response to Judeo-Christian claims regarding the antiquity and primacy of the Christian community in that city (chap. 14).

Eight chapters attempt, more or less, to rescue Luke from the charges of anachronism and historical unreliability that scholars routinely bring against Acts. In an essay previously published in *Between Jesus and Paul* (SCM, 1983), M. Hengel argues that the striking difference in Luke's geographical knowledge of the different parts of Palestine is less an indication of Luke's carelessness or ignorance than his theological program and his greater familiarity with some regions rather than others (chap. 3). S. Mason reflects the literary critic's discontent with reading texts solely as sources for historical reconstruction (chap. 5). Mason offers a prolegomenon to historical reconstruction by clarifying the narrative functions of Jewish leadership groups in Josephus and Luke. H. C. Kee's controversial contention that the picture of Palestinian synagogues in Luke-Acts is anachronistic is subjected to a thorough criticism by R. Riesner (chap. 6). Employing demographic studies on ancient cities and considering the factors affecting the density of the population in Jerusalem around the 30s AD, W. Reinhardt argues that population figures adduced by J. Jeremias and uncritically adopted by many others contribute to a drastic underestimation of the size of the Jerusalem church and an unwarranted suspicion of Luke's figures (chap. 8). D. K. Falk argues that there is no evidence to suggest that Luke's portrayal of prayer practices has been influenced by post-70-AD Jewish liturgical reform (chap. 9). B. Capper argues that Luke's account of organized property-sharing in Acts 2–6, far from being an idealizing rendition of actual events, is an example of an established feature of first-century Palestinian culture evident, for example, among the Essenes (chap. 11). Capper suggests that a group formerly linked with the Qumran Essenes probably lived in close proximity to the probable site of the Christian community in Jerusalem ca. 33–67 AD (the cenacle) and exerted an influence upon the church either indirectly or by passing into the community in response to the preaching of the disciples. Uncomfortable with a method that constructs a biography of Paul solely from his letters, S. Légasse argues that much of the information in Acts relating to the period before Paul's "conversion" is historically reliable and may be used with profit to reconstruct the apostle's pre-Christian career (chap. 13). In the longest essay, R. Bauckham wades against the stream of current consensus and explores the centrality of Jerusalem in the first-century worldview as the background for understanding both the way in which the leadership of the Jerusalem church was constituted and the role of the Jerusalem church (especially James) in the early Christian movement (chap. 15). "Luke's presentation of the Jerusalem council as an event which decisively affected the whole development of early Christianity by authoritatively discrediting the view that Gentile Christians must be circumcised is historically accurate" (p. 416).

The essays are routinely provocative and provide a gold mine of reference material. Like previous volumes in this series, the interdisciplinary approach is the strongest feature of the volume. The reassessment of the historical verisimilitude of Acts that is presently taking place in NT studies is served well by this collection. The

reader will appreciate the variety of evidence each author brings to bear. Several essays seem to be unaware of the contributions in other essays. For example, Capper's argument that the most likely site of the earliest Christian community in Jerusalem was the cenacle could have been considerably strengthened by reference to the contribution of Murphy-O'Connor. The discussions of Fiensy and Falk about the date of the Theodotus inscription appear to be unaware of much fuller treatment by Riesner (pp. 192–200). The volume lacks a good map of Palestine. The Survey of Israel reproduction at the front of the book is useless. Typographical errors in a volume of this nature are inevitable. But the omission of three footnotes on p. 26 is more than unfortunate.

A worthy addition to the series, this volume will repay careful and repeated scrutiny.

James L. Jaquette
Africa University, Mutare, Zimbabwe

God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul. By Gordon D. Fee. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, xxiv + 967 pp., \$34.99.

This extraordinary, career-crowning work from Gordon Fee, professor of NT at Regent College, Vancouver, has a twofold aim. First, it sets out to demonstrate, through sound exegesis and theological reflection, just how crucial the Spirit is in Paul's life and thought. Second, it intends to highlight the reality that, according to Paul's experience and theology, the Spirit is God personally and powerfully present in and among his people. To fulfill this twofold aim Fee presents both his analysis and his synthesis of what Paul says about the Holy Spirit.

After some introductory remarks that include preliminary observations on Paul's use of *pneuma*, Fee turns to the nine chapters in the analysis section of his work and offers systematic, detailed and chronological exegesis of more than 150 passages in which Paul says something relevant about the Spirit. Thus we are led from studies in the Thessalonian correspondence, through discussions of the Corinthian, Roman and captivity letters, to considerations in the pastoral epistles. Though not intended as full-scale commentary, these studies lay out the exegetical basis for the exposition that appears in the synthesis section of the book. A few of these chapters (e.g. on 1 Corinthians, the pastoral epistles) had their genesis in other formats, but the presentation of the material here is nonetheless newly focused on the topic at hand.

From the crucible of the analysis section, Fee sets forth the five chapters of his work's synthesis section. Therein he seeks both to bring coherence to the almost 800 pages of analysis that precede and to apply in a (more or less) programmatic fashion the findings of this study to the experience of today's Church. To achieve the first of these ends, Fee locates the starting point of his theological reflection in what for Paul was the epochal reality—namely, that through the resurrection of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church “everything in the present is [now] determined by the appearance of the future” (p. 801). In the next four chapters, Fee devotes a chapter each to the topics of the Spirit's role in Paul's understanding of (1) history and time, (2) God, (3) salvation and (4) the Church.

Regarding the Spirit's role in Paul's redemptive-historical perspective, Fee instructs us on how the Spirit's coming marks the turning of the ages; how it fulfills the ancient promises of Gentile inclusion among God's people and of the new covenant; how it effects the righteousness that the Law could not; how it redefines the Christian's re-

lationship to the flesh; and how it does not mean the end of weakness and suffering in this age.

Turning to the Spirit's role in Paul's theology proper, Fee argues that for the apostle the Spirit is indeed one person in what the Church would come to know as the trinitarian Godhead—that the Spirit is God personally present with his people. As for the Spirit's role in Paul's soteriology, we learn that the subjective, experiential appropriation of salvation in Christ is, "from faith to finish," clearly the work of the Spirit.

Finally, with reference to the Spirit's role in Paul's ecclesiology Fee explains how the Spirit is central to the Church's identity as family, temple and body, how the Spirit empowers the Church for its distinctly Christian ethical life and how the Spirit is responsible for all expressions of Christian worship, especially the exercise of the *charismata*.

In the fifth and final chapter of the synthesis section, Fee registers his plea that the Church recapture the dynamically experienced, eschatologically oriented life of the Spirit in her midst. For Fee this will be seen, first, as existing institutions, theologies, and liturgies of the Church are revitalized by the Spirit, and, second, as the Church appropriates the empowering of the Spirit for her ethical life and experiences the renewal of the *charismata* for her "Spirituality."

Because I want to close this review with words of high praise for this wonderful book, let me turn first to two areas where I found Fee's theological conclusions weakly supported. One area is his consideration of "the Spirit against the flesh" (pp. 816–822). I appreciate Fee's carefully qualified point when he says, "Paul . . . does not view life in the Spirit as a constant struggle between the flesh and the Spirit, *in which the flesh generally has the upper hand*" (p. 817, italics mine). Yet he also tells us (e.g. with regard to Gal 5:17 and Rom 7:14–25; 8:12–13) the following: "The flesh-Spirit contrast in Paul *never* appears in a context in which the issue has to do with 'how to live the Christian life'" (p. 821, italics mine). To be sure, Paul's overwhelming concern when talking about the flesh-Spirit contrast may well be with life before and after Christian conversion. That fact, however, seems hardly to preclude the contrast's application to spiritual conflict within the believer. For instance, despite Fee's arguments to the contrary we must ask this question: Unless Paul is speaking with reference to such internal warfare, is it meaningful for him to speak of the believer's life as an existence in mortal bodies where indwelling sin reigns (Rom 6:12–14; 8:10) and, at the same time, of the believer's obligation to mortify the deeds of the body by the power of the indwelling Spirit (Rom 8:12–13)?

Another more disappointing weakness in the book is Fee's recurring, dismissive comments about those who disagree with him about the relevance of the *charismata* for the life of the present-day Church. If Fee's antagonists were not showing any exegetical or theological competence in connection with this subject, they should well take his remarks as a rebuke. By Fee's own testimony, however, he has seen that competence on display, at least in the work of Reformed theologian Richard G. Gaffin (p. 893 n. 20). It is not clear, then, why Fee continues simply to write off Gaffin's work with the charge that he raises and answers questions to which Paul does not speak at all (ibid.). Indeed, Fee has yet to elaborate substantially on this charge since he first made it in his 1987 commentary on 1 Corinthians. Given Fee's evident confidence in his approach, the entire evangelical community, especially those who take a non-Pentecostal approach to the *charismata*, could only benefit from seeing an exegetical theologian of Fee's competence wrestle publicly, honestly, and deeply with the theological problems inherent in his Pentecostal view.

The abiding impression that Fee's engagingly written book should leave, however, is overwhelmingly positive. Readers will be simply astonished at its breadth and depth.

This single volume gives its readers nothing less than a virtual encyclopedia on Paul's every thought about the Spirit. The analysis section is distinguished by informed treatments of competing interpretations, the synthesis section by compelling expositions of the foci in Pauline pneumatology. Throughout these sections I find a number of highlights. Among them are Fee's attention to questions of continuity and discontinuity between the Testaments, his vigorous argumentation against the idea that Holy Spirit baptism is a postconversion experience (this from a Pentecostal scholar!), his discussion of the Spirit, power and weakness, and his excursus on the text-critical problem in 1 Cor 14:34–35 (in which he responds to critics of his conclusion that the verses are spurious). Whether we end up agreeing with Fee or not, there is always weighty material to ponder.

In summary, then, Fee's volume is a remarkable religious exercise that challenges mind and heart alike. As such, it should find its way into every library represented by *JETS'* readership.

R. Fowler White

Knox Theological Seminary, Ft. Lauderdale, FL

Faith, Obedience and Perseverance: Aspects of Paul's Letter to the Romans. By Don Garlington. WUNT 79. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994, xi + 204 pp., DM 128.

This volume represents a collection of five previous articles published by Garlington, which have been revised, and a concluding chapter and an introduction, which have been added. This is a very stimulating book, and it should be read carefully and seriously considered. The first chapter picks up where Garlington left off in his doctoral dissertation (*The Obedience of Faith: A Pauline Phrase in Historical Context*). He argues that the expression "obedience of faith" (Rom 1:5; 16:26) refers to both the obedience that "springs from faith" and the obedience that "consists in faith." This chapter is a valuable contribution, and Garlington rightly insists that faith and obedience are inseparable in Paul.

Chapter 2 presents the interesting thesis that the robbing of temples in Rom 2:22 should not be understood literally. What Paul inveighs against is the making of the Torah into an idol. Garlington canvasses a number of texts to demonstrate that Israel clung to the law as an idol and used the Torah to exclude Gentiles from the people of God. The former thesis is best supported by Gal 4:3, 8–9. Garlington follows his mentor, James Dunn, in seeing nationalism rather than legalism as the central point of tension between Paul and his Jewish compatriots. I remain unconvinced by both Dunn's and Garlington's claim that there was no polemic against legalism in Judaism, and I have interacted with this thesis elsewhere. The main difficulty with the chapter at hand is the contention that robbing temples is metaphorical rather than literal. The proscriptions against stealing and idolatry in Rom 2:21–22 are likely literal, and thus the grounds for identifying robbing of temples as metaphorical seems weak. Moreover, in Jewish literature elsewhere robbing of temples is literal (2 Macc 4:39, 42; 9:2; 13:6; *Sib. Or.* 2:14; 13:12; Josephus *Ant.* 16.45, 164; *J.W.* 5.562), and the same sense should be understood here.

The third chapter sketches in the relationship between the obedience of faith and the doing of the law. Garlington opts for the view that the righteousness of God refers to the activity of God rather than merely status (although he does not deny that a new status before God is also involved). The covenantal dimensions of the righteousness

of God are also emphasized; his righteousness involves his covenantal loyalty, which is available to both Jews and Gentiles. Garlington makes the provocative statement that Gen 15:6 cannot refer to forensic righteousness in terms of Abraham's conversion since in Gen 12:1–9 he already believed, and this belief was attested by his exodus from his homeland. I believe Garlington is correct in saying that Gen 15:6 cannot be understood as the conversion of Abraham. Most scholars have not even considered the relationship between Genesis 12 and 15, and we stand in debt to the author here. The central thesis of the chapter is also persuasive. Paul is dead serious and is not speaking hypothetically when he says that one must keep the law in order to be justified (Rom 2:13). The implications of Garlington's view are explosive. Paul believed that the law must be kept for participation in eschatological salvation. Such an emphasis on obedience, says Garlington, is hardly works-righteousness, for the good works stem from the "obedience of faith." Garlington emphasizes throughout the book that perfect obedience is not required. What is needed to obtain eternal life is perseverance, and such perseverance has its roots in faith. Faith is not merely a onetime act for believers but must characterize their entire life. Thus, justification and sanctification must not be rigidly separated as Garlington rightly argues in chap. 6. In this concluding chapter he also explores helpfully some implications for the way systematic theology should be carried out. A small disagreement with part of Garlington's exegesis must also be registered. It is quite unlikely that the words "by nature" (*physei*) in Rom 2:14 refer to "the image of God" (p. 53). The term denotes the natural condition at birth of the Gentiles.

Chapter 4 is a useful study of Romans 5, particularly the Adam-Christ relation. Garlington rightly emphasizes that the Torah is relativized by Paul, for the law is not the source of life. Two of his claims in this chapter are controversial. First, he claims that the terms "sin" and "disobedience" in Rom 5:12–19 refer to apostasy. A number of texts are introduced to defend the thesis. Surely NT writers were concerned about apostasy, but I remain unconvinced that the term "sin" has such a specific meaning, although many texts would have to be consulted to defend my own view. Second, the righteousness of believers includes the idea of "making righteous," not merely the imputing of an alien righteousness. Obviously, this whole discussion is of crucial importance in the history of the Church. In my previous work I have argued that righteousness language is forensic in Paul. But I have slowly become convinced by reading scholars like Garlington and Peter Stuhlmacher that the righteousness of God cannot be confined to forensic categories, although the latter should not be excluded. Some readers of *JETS* may be quick to brand such a view as Roman Catholic. This would be a serious mistake, for the righteousness of God, according to Garlington, is a gift and received by faith. Thus his view is compatible with those who emphasize that salvation is by faith alone.

In the fifth chapter Garlington follows Dunn in arguing that Rom 7:14–25 refers to Christian experience. The tension between the already and the not yet is crucial for his interpretation here. This chapter helps one to see that the obedience that stems from faith is not perfect obedience according to the author. What is crucial for eternal life is perseverance to the end, even though our obedience is not perfected. Garlington is not afraid to tackle difficult issues, for this chapter is one of the most controverted today and in the history of the Church. In any case, Garlington makes a good case for the thesis that Christian experience is contemplated. And the book as a whole is a valuable contribution to Pauline scholarship.

Thomas R. Schreiner
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

Subject to Whose Authority? Multiple Readings of Romans 13. By Jan Botha. Emory Studies in Early Christianity 4. Atlanta: Scholars, 1994, xiv + 261 pp., \$39.95.

The bulk of this study was written as a doctoral dissertation at the University of Stellenbosch under the direction of Bernard Latagan. Botha's aim is to present an ethically responsible reading of Rom 13:1–7. Such a reading, says Botha, cannot ignore the fact that all texts are interpreted from a certain perspective. Yet he also insists that readers must interpret texts responsibly, which means that the historical dimension of the text cannot be ignored in the process of interpretation. Botha endeavors to fulfill his goal of interpreting Rom 13:1–7 in an ethically responsible way by presenting an interpretation of the text according to four different perspectives: linguistic, literary, rhetorical and social scientific. A chapter is devoted to each of the four methods. In each case Botha provides an explanation and historical overview of the method utilized and then applies it to Rom 13:1–7.

In the chapter on the linguistic perspective, a useful survey of scholarship on the method is included. Botha applies linguistics to the meaning of certain words in Romans 13: *exousia*, *archōn*, *hypotassesthai*, *antitassomai* and *syneidēsis*. An analysis of the text at the sentence and discourse level is also provided. Botha's study of the meaning of certain words is instructive methodologically, even though he does not come to any novel conclusions. Using discourse analysis to study a text is crucial in order to discern the contours of the argument, and Botha's analysis is useful here as well. In fact, I found this chapter to be the most helpful of all those contained in the book. The succeeding chapter investigates Rom 13:1–7 from a literary perspective. Once again the method is helpfully explained and surveyed. An outline of the whole of Romans from a literary perspective is provided. Romans 13:1–7 is identified generally as parenetic literature, but Botha argues that it should be labeled more specifically as protreptic, since the text is a sustained argument in which syllogistic argumentation is employed. He goes on to say that Romans is best described as an epideictic letter in which Paul attempts "to strengthen the existing values of the recipients" so that the Romans will support Paul in his future plans. The benefits of studying Rom 13:1–7 from a literary perspective should not be slighted, and yet, upon finishing this chapter, I felt that I had not learned much more about Romans 13 than I knew before.

The survey of rhetorical criticism in the chapter on studying Rom 13:1–7 from a rhetorical perspective helpfully sketches in the broad parameters of rhetorical-critical studies. Botha explains the difference between rhetorical criticism and literary criticism and argues that epistolography is a species of rhetoric. In the case of Rom 13:1–7 he maintains that the rhetorical genre is epideictic. Paul does not primarily write this passage to exhort the readers to action. The aim is to confirm to the readers that he shares the same values as they, so that they will support him in the future. In this instance Botha's overall understanding of Romans propels him to label Rom 13:1–7 as epideictic. I would contend, on the other hand, that the passage should be understood as deliberative if one were to place it within the categories of rhetoric. Botha's contention that the readers already shared the worldview of Rom 13:1–7 is not clearly supported in the text.

Lastly, a study of Rom 13:1–7 from a social-scientific perspective is conducted. The customary survey of the discipline is presented here as well. Botha understands Rom 13:1–7 as an example of a text that holds in tension both "structure and anti-structure." Believers are to follow the norms of society so that they can continue to exist as Christian communities. Thus, obedience to the government is recommended for pragmatic reasons.

Botha's attempt to study Romans 13 from various perspectives is useful. In the final analysis one learns more about the various methods than one learns about Rom

13:1–7, however. Indeed, the exegetical harvest from Romans 13 is quite disappointing. The book's main value is in the survey of interpretive approaches. I did wonder in the course of reading this book if overattention to methodology consumes us, when a careful reading of the text can protect one from most of the errors Botha worries about. Most important, Botha says nothing about reading a text theologically. I would contend that an ethically responsible reading of the text must include the theological dimension of the text. Of course, a defensible theological reading of the text cannot be separated from a careful historical reading. Botha's own exegesis of Rom 13:1–7 may lack more depth precisely because he eliminates the theological dimension. He says at one point that "all theological ideas are always socially and culturally determined" (p. 196). Does Botha collapse all theology into sociology? If so, the group with the most power in society "wins." Botha's theological blinders lead him to the astonishing conclusion that obedience to the government is commanded for pragmatic reasons. This ignores altogether the theological grounding given in the text. Obedience is demanded because God has ordained the earthly power. Botha's appeal to "pragmatics" inserts his own explanation over against the Pauline rationale. Of course, the Pauline call to obedience should not be used to justify governmental evil. The canon itself guards us against a simplistic estimation of the role of government, for John in Revelation 13 warns us that the state may also function as a "beast."

Thomas R. Schreiner
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY

The Gifts of God and the Authentication of a Christian: An Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 8–11:1. By Paul Douglas Gardner. Lanham: University Press of America, 1994, xii + 217 pp., \$36.50.

Gardner's in-depth study of 1 Cor 8–11:1 represents his doctoral dissertation completed at Cambridge University under the supervision of Morna D. Hooker. He argues that the Corinthian Christians found authentication of their spiritual status within the community through the gift of the Spirit called *gnōsis*. The strong ate idol meat in the idol's temple to demonstrate to others the advanced state of this gift of knowledge and to mark their place as authentic members of the community. Paul's argument is traced through these three chapters as a statement that their view of status and security in the covenant community based upon this gift of the Spirit is faulty.

After introducing the issues that will be addressed in this study and surveying the major scholarly treatments of the background to the Corinthian situation, the author traces Paul's argument through a chapter-by-chapter exegesis. In chap. 8, Paul is arguing that love—not knowledge that is shown by eating meat in the temple of an idol—is the true indicator of being part of the community of God's people. The Corinthian abuse of the right (*exousia*) to eat in this way at the expense of the conscience of the weak is challenged by the illustration of Paul's own apostolic example in chap. 9. Rather than seeing it as a Pauline digression defending his apostleship, Gardner shows that this is an integral part of Paul's argument in these three chapters. Paul shows that even he submits his rights to the calling and purpose of God.

Gardner provides a great deal of background on the wilderness tradition in pre-Christian Jewish literature to show how chap. 10 functions as a warning to the strong that their sense of security was false and they were in danger of being disqualified rather than authenticated by their actions. He argues against the sacramental interpretation of this chapter in favor of one that continues to focus on how overconfidence

in God's gifts can lead to idolatry and apostasy. Paul's argument closes with a discussion of the issues involved in eating idol meat in a private home setting.

Although the overall flow of Paul's argument as traced by Gardner is cogent, there are a number of exegetical details that are not sufficiently established. The most important is whether or not *gnōsis* indeed does refer to the spiritual gift or if Paul is speaking of knowledge in a more general sense. The NT gives us little information concerning this spiritual gift. It does seem in 1 Corinthians that it is more related to utterance (1 Cor 1:5; 12:8; 14:6) than to action, and that it is perhaps related to the prophetic revelation of "mysteries" (1 Cor 13:2). A more persuasive argument is needed to support this connection to spiritual gifts that is so vital to Gardner's thesis.

Another point that is questionable is Gardner's definition of "conscience" (*syneidesis*) as a self-awareness of one's security or lack of it in the covenant community. Although "awareness" or "consciouness" are basic meanings of the word, the awareness in Paul's context here seems to be of the morality or immorality of a particular action rather than of consciousness of one's status among the people of God.

The 1994 copyright date does not accurately reflect the point at which Gardner seems to have actually completed his work. There are no references to any literature subsequent to 1987, and the bulk of his treatment seems to reflect interaction with secondary literature up until about 1981. Thus, the work of Ben Witherington, Bruce Fisk and others related to the issues in this passage will need to be consulted to bring Gardner's research up to date. Unfortunately, there is no index to the book.

In spite of the fact that I am not in agreement with some significant facets of Gardner's argumentation, it is nonetheless a helpful book on this section of Paul's epistle. It will join Wendell L. Willis' *Idol Meat in Corinth: The Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (1985) as a standard text for detailed study of these chapters. Since Willis does not treat chap. 9 and deals only with the Hellenistic background to the issues, Gardner's work is superior. This book will be invaluable to the NT exegete seeking to come to grips with this material.

Michael Kailus
Grace Training Center, Kansas City, MO

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. By Margaret E. Thrall. Vol. 1. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1994, 501 pp., \$54.95.

This ICC volume is part of an effort undertaken by T. & T. Clark in the mid-1970s to replace the older volumes of the series with new editions that take into consideration scholarly developments in the 20th century. The intent of the series remains the same. The aim of new and old volumes alike is to bring together all the relevant aids to exegesis (i.e. linguistic, textual, archeological, historical, literary and theological) to help the reader understand the books of the OT and NT (p. ix).

The present volume—a replacement for Alfred Plummer's 1915 work—gives every evidence of continuing this rich exegetical tradition. The chief exegetical problems are clearly identified and thoroughly researched, the majority of textual variants are treated in detail, word studies regularly appear, a succinct summary of Paul's line of thought precedes each pericope, there is abundant footnoting, and an awareness of and interaction with the range of scholarly opinion is in evidence throughout. Volume 1 (covering chaps. 1–7) includes a table of abbreviations, a 20-page bibliography, a 77-page introduction, commentary on the Greek text (prefaced by the author's own trans-

lation and the Nestle-Aland 26th edition) and excursuses on ἐκκλησία τοῦ θεοῦ in Paul, literary plurals, ὁ δὲ κύριος τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν (3:17a), a mirror-vision and transformation (3:18), Christophany (4:4, 6), background of thought and significance of the antithesis in 4:8–9, and pre-Pauline tradition in 5:18–21.

A note of caution needs nevertheless to be sounded. Thrall does not aim to present an unbiased exegesis of the text. What she does offer is “one possible reading of 2 Corinthians” as “a contribution to the continuing debate concerning this highly complex document” (p. xi). This distinctive lens is evident throughout the volume. Traditional understandings and scholarly consensuses are eschewed. For instance, ὁ σφραγισμένος is read in light of the Jewish rite of circumcision, rather than the Greco-Roman seal of ownership (p. 156, on 1:22). Paul’s opponents are not Christian, itinerant preachers who made light of his credentials and ministerial abilities but non-Christian, Corinthian Jews who cast doubt on Paul’s claim to be a minister of a new covenant (pp. 297, 405). Paul anticipates the receipt of a permanent, heavenly form of existence at death, not at the *parousia* (pp. 369–370). The offense Paul forgives is an accusation of misappropriation of monies from the Jerusalem relief fund, not a public challenge to his apostolic authority (pp. 68, 171, on 2:5–11). Somewhat unusual, as well, is the translation of κατοπτριζόμενοι as “behold” (3:18) and οὐκ ἐγκακοῦμεν as “we do not grow lax” (4:1)—not to mention the interpretation of τὴν νέκρωσιν τοῦ Ἰησοῦ as the “death” (versus the “dying”) of Jesus (4:10) and ἦν καταλλάσσω as a disguised aorist employed for reasons of style and rhythm (p. 434, on 5:19). Thrall is quite conservative on some critical issues. The integral positions of 2:14–7:4 and 6:14–7:1 are maintained and Pauline authorship of 6:14–7:1 is supported. On other issues she is quite progressive. 2 Corinthians 6:14–7:1 consists of baptismal motifs and terminology, chap. 9 is a letter that postdates chaps. 1–8, and chaps. 10–13 are a response to news received from the carrier of chap. 9.

Perhaps the most disappointing feature of the volume is its format and style. Scholarly positions are presented *seriatim* and in some instances without any apparent order or logic. For example, it would have been helpful to identify the primary grammatical options for “the sufferings of Christ” and deal with conceptual distinctions under the larger heading of the possessive genitive, rather than to intermingle the two (pp. 107–110, on 1:5). And why are three possibilities listed for the identity of κύριος in 3:16 (Christ, God, and Christ), when there are really only two?

There are a number of interpretive details that one could quibble with. It is a stretch, for instance, to say that 2:14–17 is a second introductory thanksgiving period, given the lack of stereotypical formulae and the absence of the usual Pauline themes (i.e. fond remembrance, thanksgiving for continuing faith, prayer for spiritual growth). To read ἀλλὰ as a strong adversative at v. 14a but progressive and intensive at v. 15a is without contextual foundation. To construe καταργουμέν-/καταργεῖται as an effacing radiance (vv. 7, 13), a terminating Mosaic covenant (v. 11) and an abolished veil (v. 14) in the space of seven verses is problematic.

Grammatical difficulties are occasionally passed over (e.g. 4:4, 6). There are also spots that beg for clarification. How is it that the genitive in 1:5 can be “not purely possessive” and “the same thing as the possessive” (p. 107 n. 193)? Is it likely that the Corinthians had prior knowledge of Paul’s affliction in Asia or did not have it (p. 114, on 1:8)? To be mentioned as well are Thrall’s multifaceted conclusions, which sometimes hinder rather than aid understanding of the text (e.g. ὁσμή derives from the ideas of sacrifice, Torah and wisdom and combines motifs from each; p. 207, on 2:16).

In the final analysis, however, this magisterial work accomplishes its purpose and then some. No exegetical stone is left unturned. This makes Thrall’s work a welcome addition to the library of the scholar and the serious student. It is not, however, for the novice. It assumes a good knowledge of Biblical Greek and an ample familiarity

with the critical and exegetical issues of 2 Corinthians. Even the knowledgeable exegete will find Thrall's work slow going.

Linda L. Belleville
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL

A Handbook on Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians. By Roger L. Omanson and John Ellington. New York: United Bible Societies, 1993, 272 pp., \$14.00 paper.

This volume is part of the UBS Handbook series, which aims to provide translation help to those who do not speak English as their mother tongue and have only a limited knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. To this end, explanations of English idioms are provided and Hebrew and Greek words are avoided—even in transliteration (p. 1). The *Handbook* is to be distinguished from the UBS *A Translator's Guide*, which tries to alert the more experienced translator to pitfalls that may otherwise be overlooked (Preface).

The *Handbook* is based on the fourth revised edition of *UBSGNT*. Like the *Guide*, the RSV and TEV are printed in parallel columns. The RSV, rather than the NRSV, is used because the RSV is thought to be the more literal translation and, therefore, a better guide to the grammatical structure of the Greek text (p. 2). The *Handbook* includes a map of Paul's first and second journeys, a brief section dealing with introductory matters (e.g. background, content, the unity of the letter, special problems in translating 2 Corinthians, and an outline), commentary on the text, a bibliography, a glossary of technical terms, and a brief index of key concepts and words.

On the plus side, the *Handbook* is clear and readable. It is also up to date in its language (e.g. 1:24 "act like a boss") and current in its scholarly awareness (see on 1:1–2). Its cross-cultural sensitivity is to be commended. The translator is routinely alerted to terms that in certain nonwestern contexts would be culturally inappropriate (e.g. "slave") or misleading (e.g. "unbeliever" = "non-Muslim" in Islam). The *Handbook* also does a good job of providing the translator with helpful information. The range of translations referenced is truly impressive. I counted 42, including some like the Brazilian Portuguese common language version (e.g. 8:22). Places are regularly identified where translators need to be more precise ("Jewish Christians," 9:1) or clearer (e.g., who are "the saints" in 1:1?). Common pitfalls are noted such as using language that is cliché ("preaching Jesus," 11:4), gender exclusive ("brothers"), misleading ("a holy kiss," 13:12) or overly literal (e.g. 10:1; 11:5). The *Handbook* does a good job of identifying the text-critical issues. Very few are overlooked (1:6–7 being an obvious exception), and most are judiciously handled.

On the negative side the *Handbook's* studious avoidance of any reference to Greek grammar results in an analysis that is, at best, ambiguous (e.g. "the structure of the Greek favors . . ." p. 13) and, at worst, misleading (e.g. it is *ei* plus the indicative, not the context *per se*, that points to a concrete situation in 2:5 and 11:4). There are numerous instances where a reference to Greek grammar could have been used to good advantage, and the few spots where grammatical significance is drawn out show that this can be done in a helpful and understandable way (e.g. 1:21; 2:10).

The most serious defect of this volume is that it is overly ambitious. The *Handbook's* guiding principle is to provide the reader with information not just for translating the text but also for interpreting it. Here it falls far short. It tries to be a "full-service" commentary without the expertise or space to do so. This is especially evident in its handling of critical issues, scholarly developments, manuscript evidence,

interpretive problems, and points of exegesis. (1) Although the critical issues are clearly identified, evaluation of the evidence and presentation of solutions is less than helpful. For instance, after a superficial examination of 1:23–24 and 7:1–4 the conclusion is drawn that 2 Corinthians does not provide enough information to decide whether Paul's "we" statements are genuine or epistolary plurals (pp. 5–6). What is not mentioned is that Paul fluctuates between "I" and "we" references only when discussing his travel plans (1:15–2:13; 7:2–16) and that the material in between (2:14–7:1) is cast in its entirety in the first-person plural—a parallel found wanting in all of Paul's letters except 1 and 2 Thessalonians where few, if any, would contest a genuine plural. The primary issue at 2:14 is not accurately identified (i.e. abrupt change of tone and mood; p. 48). Key options for 6:14–7:1 are missing (e.g. Pauline authorship). Discussion at 9:1 ignores the issue of word order that has led some to think that chap. 9 is a separate letter.

(2) Awareness of advances in scholarship is evident at some points (e.g. 1:1–2) but lacking at others. For example, τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου in 1:9 is a decision made in response to an official petition, not a verdict rendered by a judge in a court of law (p. 19; see C. Hemer, *TynBul* 23 [1972] 103–107). Also, to translate παρακαλῶ at 10:1 as "I entreat" or "beseech" is to overlook first-century epistolary usage of the verb (p. 176). (3) While the *Handbook* does a good job of identifying the text-critical issues, comments like "some manuscripts have" (e.g. 1:12) and "a few manuscripts have" (e.g. 5:3) can lead the inexperienced exegete to think that quantity, rather than quality, is the determining factor. Moreover, to say that the message of 5:3 is the same regardless of whether the text reads "put off" or "put on" is just plain misinformed.

(4) Interpretive problems are poorly handled. Some interpretive positions are misunderstood (e.g. 5:21 "made sin" = "treated as a sinner," not "made a sinner"). There is also the occasional sidestepping of the issue. For instance, if "apostles of the churches" in 8:23 is a reference not to the Twelve, then to whom/what, and how should it be translated to avoid confusion? And the Greek in 9:10 may, indeed, be translated "God will multiply your seed," but what does it mean (see also 8:12)? Sometimes key options are missing (e.g. τέλος can mean "goal," as well as "cessation" [3:13]; πάντων ἀπέθανεν could be a gnomic aorist ["all die," 5:14]; Paul could be "inflamed" with shame at the dishonoring of Christ's name [11:29]; ἐξέστημεν could refer to ecstatic experiences [5:13]). Other times options are not clearly differentiated (e.g. 3:14b; 5:19a) or are unclear (e.g. "Christ's suffering was great on behalf of the senders of the letter" [1:5]).

(5) There are flaws in exegetical understanding. For instance, σάρξ in Paul's writings does not invariably mean "humankind in its opposition to God" (p. 29; see BAGD). That θαρρέω carries the idea of quiet confidence is without foundation (5:5; see LSJ). Ἄνθρωποι is generic, not gender specific (e.g. 5:11). To translate 10:15 "we will be praised" as opposed to "our area of activity will greatly expand" flies in the face of the context. "I know a man" is hardly a well-known form of "tongue-in-cheek rhetoric" (12:2). "Seven" is not the most commonly considered number of heavens in Jewish writings (12:2; Philo = 1; *T. Levi* = 3; 3 *Apoc. Bar.* = 5). An epistolary aorist is not a possible construal of συναπέστειλα in the context of 12:17–18. And "find out whether you are living as Christians should live" begs the issue of 13:5.

If the *Handbook* had confined itself to providing translation helps, this would have been a fine volume indeed. But its interpretive shortcomings cannot be overlooked—especially when its target audience is the inexperienced translator and novice exegete. Too much misinformation occurs in this volume to make it a reliable option. The choice of going with the RSV instead of the NRSV is also a serious drawback. Even

so, the seasoned exegete will find the *Handbook* an asset. For someone not terribly familiar with 2 Corinthians, the *Guide* (\$12.00!) is the better option. It handles interpretive problems judiciously and accurately, treats matters of Greek grammar clearly and effectively and leaves the critical issues to the full-scale commentaries.

Linda L. Belleville
North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, IL

Comfort One Another. Reconstructing the Rhetoric and Audience of 1 Thessalonians.
By Abraham Smith. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995, 160 pp., \$15.99 paper.

Biblical scholars have become enamored of late in using ancient rhetoric—the Greco-Roman rules for speech—to interpret the written text of Scripture. Abraham Smith in his recent monograph, *Comfort One Another*, joins this burgeoning trend but also adds to his study a strong emphasis on sociological considerations as he attempts to “move from rhetorical analysis to the social setting of the text” (p. 14). Smith’s central thesis is that Paul consciously constructed 1 Thessalonians in the form of a Hellenistic letter of consolation and that he exploited the rhetorical and social conventions of the consolatory tradition both to comfort and challenge believers in Thessalonica.

In the first chapter (“Charting a Course for Interpretation”), Smith introduces his “audience-oriented approach” to Paul’s letters. This approach is defined as a type of literary criticism that focuses on “first century CE writers’ exploitation of rhetorical strategies” whereby they “characterize or construct a rhetorical situation rather than simply respond to it” (p. 22). In the second chapter (“Reconstructing Hellenistic Rhetoric”), Smith investigates in a cursory manner various rhetorical strategies operative in Paul’s world. The focus of the third chapter (“Determining the Genre”) is rooted in Smith’s conviction that determining the genre of 1 Thessalonians provides the key to discovering “both the specific function of 1 Thessalonians and more specific information about Paul’s auditors, their needs, questions and longings” (p. 43). This key is to be found in the letter of consolation, for there are “striking similarities between Paul’s letter [to the Thessalonians] and the Hellenistic consolatory tradition” (p. 58; surprisingly, there is no reference here or elsewhere in the book to the article of Juan Chapa, who examines parallels between 1 Thess 4:13–5:11 and the letter of consolation: “Consolatory Patterns? 1 Thess 4,13.18; 5,11,” *The Thessalonian Correspondence* [ed. R. Collins; Leuven: Leuven University, 1990] 220–228).

The fourth chapter (“Reconstructing the Rhetoric”) involves a protracted rhetorical analysis of 1 Thessalonians. Following the simplified *dispositio* of the consolatory letters, Smith sees the structure of 1 Thessalonians as consisting of the *exordium* (1:1–5), consolatory arguments (1:6–2:16; 2:17–3:13; 4:1–5:22), and the *peroratio* (5:23–25). The fifth and final chapter relates how the image of the Thessalonians portrayed in Paul’s strategic communication (the created rhetorical situation) compares with extratextual cultural studies of Thessalonica and its inhabitants (the actual historical situation).

An evaluation of Smith’s monograph depends in large measure on one’s convictions about rhetorical criticism. Although I appreciate the concern of rhetorical criticism to take seriously the form of a given text instead of simply its content, I remain unconvinced that the best way to approach Paul’s written letters is by using the ancient Greco-Roman rules for oral speech. Despite the claim of many that the forms of rhetoric in Paul’s day were “in the air,” there is no concrete evidence that the apostle was ever trained in these forms or consciously used them in his letters (Smith dis-

misses this issue, stating: "The question of whether Paul knew rhetorical theory need not concern us" [p. 113 n. 14]).

But, leaving aside the complex and controversial issue over the use of Hellenistic rhetoric in interpreting the Pauline letters, there still remains the question of whether 1 Thessalonians was consciously written by Paul as a letter of consolation. Some of the parallels that Smith presents are certainly suggestive of this genre. Yet there remain significant differences between 1 Thessalonians and consolatory letters. For example, the thanksgiving section of Paul's letter (1 Thess 1:2–10)—a section that foreshadows the major themes and tone of the letter—does not emphasize even in a minor way the theme of comfort or consolation. Furthermore, the body section of consolatory letters typically begins by stressing the great sympathy that the writer shares with the grieving reader(s). The body section of 1 Thessalonians (2:1–12), however, opens with a description of Paul's and his coworkers' original ministry in Thessalonica that sounds, contrary to Smith's claims, much more defensive and apologetic than sympathetic and consoling. And while somewhat stronger parallels with the consolatory letter can be found in 1 Thess 4:13–5:11, even here the differences are such that the conclusion reached some time ago by Abraham Malherbe must still be judged correct: "The traditions that he [Paul] uses do not have their origin in the consolations" ("Exhortation in First Thessalonians," *NovT* 25 [1983] 256).

To conclude: Although Smith has presented a provocative proposal that Paul wrote 1 Thessalonians with a full knowledge of the tradition of Greco-Roman letters of consolation, his argument does not ultimately prove to be convincing. And, while his rhetorical and sociological analysis at times offers new insights into this letter, his "audience-oriented" literary approach has not resulted in the radically new and perceptive interpretation of 1 Thessalonians that he claims his method will produce.

Jeffrey A. D. Weima

Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, MI

First and Second Peter, James and Jude. By PHEME PERKINS. Interpretation. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1995, vi + 204 pp., \$32.00.

PHEME PERKINS has written another volume in the Interpretation series, an expository series designed for teachers, preachers and serious students. She has an excellent writing style, succinct presentation of complex ideas and reflects the results of modern critical studies. The noncanonical order of the title hints at the rearranged presentation in the commentary: 1 Peter, James, Jude, 2 Peter. This is based implicitly upon critical conclusions regarding authorship, interdependence, literary conventions, and reconstructed historical situations.

As a preface to the volume and the introductions to the individual books, PERKINS offers a general introduction to all four letters in which she deals with "general epistles," (late) canonicity, apostolic authorship (not!) and the interrelationship of these writings. Emphasis is given to the specific issues facing the receiving churches and the pseudepigraphers' use of "traditional materials" to address a set of problems later than the persons whose names these letters bear.

Each section is presented as an expository essay rather than an exegesis of individual words or phrases. This keeps the commentary readable and gives a cohesive presentation of each paragraph's message and import. At the same time, PERKINS incorporates the results of critical scholarship in a manner that is unobtrusive, yet evident to the informed reader. Occasionally she alludes in an irenic manner to more conservative positions. In each section PERKINS carefully relates the message of the

text to analogous circumstances in our world. Some are presented abstractly and others in a variety of applications that are surprisingly specific to the 1990s, revealing the breadth of her own ministerial experience.

Since the volume is designed for teaching and preaching, she also counts the readings from these letters in the *Revised Common Lectionary*—so few that “it explains the church’s unfamiliarity with these letters.” This concern for use in worship is carried over into the essays on lectionary passages by highlighting the theological motif for the day. The reading of 1 Pet 3:18–22 at the beginning of Lent, for example, “echoes the highlights in the story of salvation” and “God’s grace that was given to [Christians] in baptism.” Occasional asides are presented in a way that is appropriate to the context and yet exposes the reader to contemporary scholarship. In 2 Pet 3:14–18 she compares canon criticism to a child’s toy box, emphasizing that the whole Bible provides the larger horizon within which the individual pieces make sense.

This commentary is useful for persons who are informed theologically and exegetically. We would disagree with her on several critical issues and some interpretations of the text, yet it is an excellent example of good writing and the clear presentation of the determined meaning of the letters. In evangelical situations it would be useful for analytical comparison, as an example of critical positions put to positive Christian exhortation, and as a model of scholarship for pastors and teachers.

In a decade when evangelical worship is suffering metamorphosis, it is good to be reminded again of the Christian calendar and the importance of theological formulations built upon the public reading of Scripture.

Norman R. Ericson
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

The Theology of the Book of Revelation. By Richard Bauckham. Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1993, xv + 169 pp., \$14.95 paper. *The Apocalypse: A Reading of the Revelation of John.* By Charles H. Talbert. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994, ix + 123 pp., \$12.99 paper.

Both volumes go a long way toward filling gaps that still exist in spite of the recent avalanche of literature on the Apocalypse. Amazingly, comprehensive theologies of Revelation (like Bauckham’s) and compact, but fresh, commentaries on Revelation (as Talbert’s certainly is) have suffered through a virtual drought period, at the same time in which a bumper crop of varied highly specialized studies on the Apocalypse have emerged.

Of the two, Bauckham’s contribution is the more prominent but, in one ironic sense, the less original. If nothing else, inclusion in the significant New Testament Theology series, edited by J. D. G. Dunn, marks Bauckham’s work as noteworthy. Dunn and Cambridge University Press are to be commended both for planning such a volume devoted solely to the Apocalypse and for assigning it to Bauckham, whose massive scholarly output related to Revelation since the later 1970s is broad and deep.

On the other hand, it should be realized that the content of *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* is essentially a “Cliffs Notes” condensed version of Bauckham’s recent anthology of mostly previously published articles, *The Climax of Prophecy* (T. & T. Clark, 1993). That volume, with extensive notes and full bibliography, has the luxury of developing Bauckham’s (often) creative views in depth.

In a review of this length, it is only possible to discuss what is surely Bauckham’s most substantial, and most controversial, contribution in both *Climax* and *Theology*.

For example, a recent survey of the status and immediate future of NT studies by C. Blomberg expressed reservations about Bauckham's understanding of "the conversion of the nations" in Revelation (and he is not alone in that assessment).

In the studied opinion of this reviewer, however, Bauckham is on the right track. Certain passages in the Apocalypse (notably 7:9–17; 14:6 ff.; 15:2 ff.) do not reflect the conversion of many worldwide at the end of the age, prior to Christ's second advent, as the reference to "the end of the age" in the Matthean great commission (Matt 28:20) implies. Interestingly, however, Bauckham derives his evidence from less obvious (sometimes bordering on obscure) sources in the OT and intertestamental literature, overlooking a considerable amount of relevant NT data (e.g. Matt 13:24–30, 36–43; 24:14).

Much like Bauckham's *Theology*, Talbert's *The Apocalypse* handles a great deal of important material in a readable manner and in short compass and does so with very few notes. (Unlike *Theology*, though, it utilizes endnotes to keep the documentation from cluttering the movement of the commentary.) Thus *The Apocalypse* also seeks to appeal to a wider audience than just scholars and professors.

There is only space here to underscore two consistent notes that Talbert continues to sound throughout *The Apocalypse*. First, painting on even a broader canvas than Bauckham does, Talbert has skillfully mined the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works for thought patterns found in Revelation. Most of the connections drawn are plausible and, at the least, thought-provoking. For example, premillennialists will be interested in the discussion on the background of the "Great Tribulation."

Second (and unexpected in a commentary of this brevity), Talbert offers numerous useful observations on literary structural aspects of the book of Revelation. Noting clear instances of parallelism and chiasmus is consistent with Talbert's longtime literary interests reflected in his impressive body of scholarship. However, since his recent commentary segment on Philippians in the *Mercer One-Volume Commentary on the Bible* (1994) shows that Talbert is well aware of sophisticated macrostructure in the NT (in Philippians, a grand chiasm), it could have been hoped that he would provide such sorely needed insights to the "big picture" structure of Revelation. Alas, so much to do and so little space!

In spite of the fact that neither author is as conservative as the membership of the ETS, both offer timely insights from which evangelicals can profit. Thus, given the limitations expressed above, both volumes can be recommended as worthwhile complementary investments for evangelical scholars, pastors and even serious lay students in their deepening, increasingly sophisticated study of the Apocalypse.

A. Boyd Luter
Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Brea, CA

Jesus and Israel: One Covenant or Two? By David E. Holwerda. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, xi + 193 pp., \$12.99.

Answering the question posed in the subtitle, Holwerda defends the "one covenant" view—namely, that the new covenant Church (and it alone) stands in essential continuity with old covenant Israel. Developing his case exegetically, primarily from material in the gospels, he demonstrates that holy people, temple and land/city are through Christ (and through him exclusively) brought to their true and full manifestation. His conclusion: "Any so-called literalistic or particularistic fulfillment occurring

outside or apart from this authentic resolution of the basic problem cannot be the genuine fulfillment that the Old Testament promises" (p. 182).

Various forms of dispensationalism are (more or less consistently) "two covenant" views. Another such is the approach of liberal and neo-orthodox ecumenists who regard Judaism with its back to Christ as a valid product of the old covenant, alongside the Church. In the support provided for a traditional Reformed (and even amillennial) theology of the covenants over against these "two covenant" aberrations lies the chief contribution of Holwerda's work. He is to be commended for not letting false charges of anti-Semitism deter him from affirming the exclusive claims of the Christian way, while at the same time evincing a deeply sympathetic concern for the Jewish people in the Holocaust-intensified tragedy of their diaspora and a Pauline desire for their salvation.

Not so successful is Holwerda's handling of the secondary differences present within the fundamental unity of the old and new covenants. A core complex of such elements of discontinuity arose under the old covenant. As ratified by Israel's oath, this covenant sealed their corporate election as a kingdom people to occupy the typological holy land, continuance in this temporary status being governed by law (i.e. works in contrast to grace). This covenantal core of national election, typological theocratic domain, and law formed an indivisible complex of mutually limiting and conditioning components. It was a second layer superimposed on the constant foundational stratum of individual election in Christ to eternal glory. It was constituted by and correlative with the old covenant specifically, and, therefore, the termination of the old covenant meant the discontinuance of this complex and the disappearance of its several components. The main defect of Holwerda's book is that in a variety of ways he blurs the discontinuity with the new covenant that is entailed in this peculiar core complex of the old covenant.

One critical instance of this failing is that he obscures the contrast between law and gospel, so emphatically taught by Paul. While recognizing that Israel's obedience was "the legal basis for possessing the land" (p. 92), Holwerda skirts the issue of the law-identity of the old covenant as such. In his chapter on "Jesus and the Law" (pp. 113–145) the crucial question of the law-as-works principle gets lost in a discussion of law as a standard of conduct. At this point especially the author's limitation of his exegetical base largely to the gospels runs counter to the book's purpose of investigating the relation of the old and new covenants.

Also blurred is the discontinuity between national and individual election. This fault surfaces particularly in the study of Romans 9–11 in the chapter "A Future for Jewish Israel?" (pp. 147–176), the structural climax of the book.

Extracting Israel's national election from the old covenant matrix of typological kingdom and law (i.e. works) that gave it substance and definition, Holwerda refashions it into a component of God's covenant promise to Abraham of an elect seed in Christ. This melding of national and individual elections determines Holwerda's exegesis of Romans 9–11. It drives him to adopt the erroneous view that Paul foretells a nationwide salvation of Jewry in the final generation, which is supposed to salvage God's reputation as a promise-keeper in spite of the fall of the nation Israel. But if Israel's national election is made a subset of individual election in Christ, the principle of sovereign grace operating in the latter would govern the national election too. Israel would then have to experience nationwide salvation in every generation without exception. Even if the alleged last generation conversion of the Jews transpired, God's promise would still have failed in every previous generation.

It is the melding of the two elections, Holwerda's controlling premise, that actually creates the problem. Accordingly, Paul's solution is to challenge that confused blend, maintaining over against it the discontinuity: Not all who are of Israel, the elect na-

tion, are Israel, the promised seed of Abraham, elect in Christ (Rom 9:6). At the same time, the apostle affirms the continuity within the individual election (Rom 11:28b, 29; cf. Gal 3:17). Indeed, he observes, even the failure of the national (works) election subserves the realization of the individual (grace) election among the Gentiles—and that in turn the continuing salvation of the elect remnant of Jews (Rom 11:11–24). So it is that a fullness of Israel and a fullness of Gentiles is achieved, an exceptionless triumph of sovereign grace, a perfect fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham in Christ (Rom 11:25–36).

Meredith G. Kline
Westminster Theological Seminary in California, Escondido, CA

Is It Okay to Call God "Mother"? Considering the Feminine Face of God. By Paul R. Smith. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1993, x + 278 pp., \$11.95 paper.

The thesis of this provocatively titled book is that language about God affects the shape of the Church, for better or worse. The author, a Southern Baptist minister in Kansas City, wants to shape the Church for the better. With anecdote, wit and wide reading in feminist theology, Paul R. Smith argues that the inclusion of feminine titles and images for God in preaching and worship is essential for a recovery of the whole gospel and for the full participation of women in the life of the Church. Smith is an evangelical and charismatic who sees patriarchy as a sin—indeed, as a tool of the devil to impede evangelism and keep the Church from being what God intends it to be. Unlike many advocates of radical feminism, Smith does not want to eliminate masculine nomenclature for God, but to supplement it in equal degree by feminine nomenclature. Smith encourages experimentation in worship based on gender inclusiveness and offers prayers and liturgical helps throughout. Some are exclusively feminine, as is this prayer: "Holy God, Life-giving Mother, nurse us with your spiritual milk so we may grow up strong in Christ." Others combine gender imagery, such as this call to worship: "May the God who mothers us all, bear us on the breath of dawn, and make us to shine like the Son, and hold us in the palm of her hand," or this version of the doxology: "In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the One God who is Mother to us all."

The book begins with a hypothetical visit to First Church Anywhere by an inquiring couple who end up being alienated by a masculine-dominated worship service. Smith follows in chaps. 2 and 3 with discussions of feminine imagery for God in the Old and New Testaments. In light of a "War on Women" from both culture and Church (chap. 4), Smith argues that it is important for Christians to call God "Mother" (chap. 5). Chapters 6 and 7 turn to psychology: the inner healing that occurs when Christians include feminine imagery in prayer and theology, and why there are strong reactions against doing so. In chap. 8 Smith attempts an intriguing analogy between the early Church's acceptance of Gentiles in Acts 15 and the modern Church's wrestling with feminine nomenclature for God. Unfortunately, the argument is not pursued with the care or depth necessary to make it productive. The book concludes with pastoral advice on making the change to gender inclusive worship ("Smith's Salient Sayings," chap. 9), and worship directives (chap. 10).

This book is as much an apology for women in the Church, and particularly in the Southern Baptist Convention, as for feminine nomenclature for God. Some churches are able to separate justice issues of women from theological nomenclature for God (a position I hold). Smith assumes, however, that theological nomenclature determines

the role of women in the Church, and it is this assumption to which I shall devote this review.

A running assumption is that the battering of women, the poor self-image of girls, justice concerns, and the “rape of our ecosystems” are the result of “patriarchy” (never defined), and that these abuses will be rectified by calling God “Mother.” These are genuine concerns, but it is a flawed logic that considers such things the consequence of conceiving of God as Father. One would have to show that people who think of God as Father are more calloused, abusive, or violent than those who do not, and I do not believe that can be shown. This volume, at any rate, does not show it. Anyone who truly knows God as the Father of Jesus Christ cannot—and will not—justify such things. These straw associations are commonplace today: Christian “supersessionism” is blamed for the Holocaust, Christian anthropology is blamed for the ecological crisis. This book, like many others, argues that Christian “patriarchy” is to blame for injustices to women. The Church may well need to correct its theology and praxis, but let us hope for the day when it subjects such easy and erroneous notions to more critical scrutiny.

A second critique concerns the overall handling of Biblical material. The author is overly ready to find evidence for feminine nomenclature for God, and this leads to instances of shoddy exegesis and vastly overstated conclusions. Especially in the OT, Smith falls victim to the exaggerated claims of radical feminist studies and fails to sift the evidence fairly. He suggests, for instance, that ʿĒlōhîm is androgynous, combining a female goddess ʿĒlōah and a male god ʿĒl . This suggestion is without substance; ʿĒlōah , which is rare, appears rather to be a late singular form of ʿĒlōhîm , which is masculine. Texts involving the word “womb” are consistently exaggerated or mistranslated. Jeremiah 31:20 is rendered “Therefore, my womb trembles for him; I will surely have motherly-compassion upon him.” This is a biased and irresponsible rendering. The complete feminization of this verse is based on a single word, *rahām*, which means “the inward parts” (i.e. seat of emotions, compassion) as well as “womb.” *Rahām* can be used of conquering heroes—where it scarcely means “womb”! Murky or controversial derivations are used to determine a word’s textual meaning. The author argues that *Šadday* means “divine breasts,” and thus presents a suckling feminine deity. *Šadday*, in fact, means “mountain” (hence the shape of a breast, e.g. Grand Teton), and in every use in the OT carries the sense of power, omnipotence. The author says of Ps 22:9 (“Yet it was you who took me from the womb, you kept me safe on my mother’s breast”) that “God is seen in the intimate Hebrew characteristic role of midwife” (p. 74). The author does not note that the Hebrew pronoun for “you” is masculine (ʿattā), not feminine (ʿatt). The Psalmist clearly conceives of God as masculine, but with the tenderness of a midwife.

Smith is more judicious with the NT material. He rightly acknowledges that Jesus addressed God only as Father (170 times) and taught his disciples to do likewise. Here he is assisted by the important study of Robert Hamerton-Kelly, *God the Father*. But he is not free from flights of fancy, as when he argues that Paul’s Areopagus speech in Acts 17:24–28 describes a “transcendent divine womb.” Likewise with the patristic evidence, he misrepresents feminine imagery for God in a passage of Clement of Alexandria that is categorically masculine (*Instructor* 1.6), and he leads readers to assume that women were ordained in the early Church until AD 365. In these and other places, Smith reads his position into Scripture rather than out of it, and that is a trenchant criticism of one who claims a high view of Biblical inspiration.

In addition to the above, the author as a matter of course uses analogies and anecdotes that are irrelevant to the point needing proof. Five Scripture passages are cited, for instance, as evidence for “God as a Woman in Labor and Giving Birth”—

four of which refer to believers, not God. The one remaining (Isa 42:14, "I will cry out like a woman in labor, I will gasp and pant") fails to note that the simile of comparison is to crying out, not to womanhood. Not one passage, in other words, supports the author's contention.

Whenever language is under consideration, the difference between analogy and metaphor needs to be kept in mind. Here the studies of Roland Frye are immensely helpful. A simile compares one aspect of something to another, as in Isa 42:14, "I will cry out *like* a woman in labor," whereas a metaphor compares the whole of something to the whole of another. This distinction is largely blurred or ignored in the present volume. Smith regularly assumes that a simile carries the weight of a metaphor. The Bible occasionally likens God to a woman, but it never calls God "Mother." God rather *is* Father, Lord, Husband, King—all masculine metaphors.

Paul Smith writes with an absence of malice, and this is perhaps his chief contribution to a subject that has become an ideological minefield. He desires to emancipate men as well as women, better to fulfill the image of God. Nevertheless, when the mass of false or irrelevant evidence is subtracted from the total argument of the book, the remnant of evidence is scarcely sufficient to sustain the claim that Scripture conceives of God as Mother and that believers should likewise. Smith fails to acknowledge the preponderance of masculine nomenclature for God in Scripture and to consider its possible relation to God's nature. He is likewise naive about the inevitable compromise of the transcendence of God that is posed by radical feminism, with its tendency to identify God with creation in one form of pantheism or another. We still await a study that establishes the rightful roles of men and women in the created order without jeopardizing either the language of revelation or the nature of God.

James R. Edwards
Jamestown College, Jamestown, ND

God and Caesar: Selected Essays from the 1993 Evangelical Theological Society's Convention at Washington, D.C. Edited by Michael Bauman and David Hall. Camp Hill: Christian Publications, 1994, 370 pp., n.p. paper.

These eclectic essays were first delivered at the ETS conference in Washington in 1993. Addressing everything from Reformed establishmentarianism to homosexual service in the United States military, they illustrate both the breadth of evangelical political concern and the desire of the evangelical community to engage critical issues thoughtfully.

Those looking for another "Christians and politics" book will be disappointed. The two sections of the book deal with aspects of the Church's interaction with government in history (from Irenaeus and Erasmus to Spurgeon) and the practical application of Christian faith to modern political issues.

This diversity is both the book's strength and weakness. From D. Hall's "Groen Van Prinsterer: Political Paradigm from the Past" to D. J. Ewearitt's "Rush Limbaugh: Politically Incorrect, Biblically Correct?", the book demonstrates the richness of evangelical thought but lacks the cohesion necessary to make it compelling. This said, as a reference source, as a reflection of modern evangelicalism's ranging intellectual approaches to public policy and in its often probative essays, *God and Caesar* is a helpful

contribution to the larger debate about how the Church has met and should meet the challenges of political experience.

Rob Schwarzwalder
Alexandria, VA

The Fabric of Theology: A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology. By Richard Lints. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993, 359 pp., \$19.99 paper.

In recent years theological method has become the subject of such an extensive discussion in mainline Protestantism that many are calling for the abandonment of this preoccupation in favor of actually doing theology. In evangelical Protestantism, however, the situation is very nearly the reverse. While evangelicals have produced a significant number of works concerned with the content and exposition of theology, little attention has been given to methodological concerns and to the careful examination of theological presuppositions. But a number of recent works suggest that this lacuna in evangelical theology is beginning to be filled. Among them is this study by Lints, in which he provides an extended and illuminating discussion of theological prolegomena and method from an evangelical perspective and provides stimulus for further reflection and work.

The book is divided into three parts, the first dealing both with the context in which the task of evangelical theology is carried out and the foundations of that theology. Lints provides a succinct survey of American evangelicalism and draws attention to the ways in which the history of the movement has shaped its thought. He rightly concludes that American evangelicalism is fragmented because the current evangelical consensus forces those from different traditions to repress their theological distinctives, thus creating a false sense of unity. He observes that evangelicals have not yet developed a "principled pluralism" that is able to accommodate both a commitment to the essentials as well as a recognition of the considerable theological diversity within the movement. This failure undermines efforts to develop a broad theological vision able to sustain and direct the Church in the modern world, a failure Lints attempts to correct.

For evangelicals the foundation of such a theology is the Bible. Accordingly Lints discusses the role of the Bible in the formulation of theology and stresses the importance of recognizing both the divine and human origins of Scripture in the practice of interpretation. He is especially helpful in his summary of the filters through which all individuals encounter Scripture: tradition, culture and reason. Although Biblical revelation stands in an authoritative position relative to the filters, they nevertheless influence the interpretation of that authority. But these filters do not make the interpretation of Scripture a merely subjective exercise. Lints points out that the goal of theology is to "bring the biblical revelation into a position of judgment on all of life, including the filters, and thereby to bring the cleansing power of God's redemption into all of life."

In the second part, Lints considers the theological past and present and their role in contemporary theological formulation. Concerning the past he considers the movement from Biblical text to doctrine by employing four case studies: the magisterial Reformers Luther and Calvin, and two Reformed scholastics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Edwards and Vos. The basis for the selection of these figures is their significant role in the shaping of the evangelical heritage and/or their commit-

ment to the redemptive-historical use of Scripture in the formulation of a theological vision. While these figures fit nicely into Lints' argument, the narrowness of his selection of illustrative theologians of the past is a major weakness of the book. Concerning the theological present, Lints' analysis of postmodern theology is outstanding and constitutes a significant engagement of postmodern theological trends from an evangelical perspective.

In the final section, Lints offers a concrete proposal for the construction of a theological framework and the appropriation of a theological vision. After discussing the theological character of the Bible, Lints commends the redemptive-historical approach to Scripture as an appropriate matrix in which to find interpretive unity and develop a more full-orbed theology. He explains that a theological framework must mirror the interpretive matrix found in Scripture and that only when the Church has grappled with the establishment of a Biblically adequate theological framework can it develop a theological vision that is both Biblical and appropriate to the contemporary situation. Such a theological vision will be adaptable to varied and changing contexts but will not fall prey to relativism because its grounding is constant. Lints concludes by discussing the three audiences to which a theological vision needs to be addressed: the Church, the culture, and the academy.

This is an important and useful book. It merits thoughtful consideration from those who are concerned about the increasing marginalization of theology in American evangelicalism. Although Lints covers a vast amount of territory and admits that parts of his argument are presented only in "skeletal" form, he manages to accomplish his principal objectives of demonstrating the importance of prolegomena in the work of theology and establishing the unity of the theological enterprise. Along the way he offers a number of constructive proposals for the renewal of theology as a discipline that is responsive to the needs of the Church as well as to the challenges of contemporary culture. A good deal of work still needs to be done, and hopefully the discussion now developing in evangelical circles concerning theological method will continue to advance and expand. For those seeking an introduction to the issues and a foundation from which to enter the conversation, Lints provides an excellent place to start.

John R. Franke
Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield, PA

A Theology of Word and Spirit: Authority & Method in Theology. By Donald G. Bloesch. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992, 336 pp., \$22.99.

This is the first volume of a projected seven-volume work in systematic theology by Bloesch, which will involve an "in-depth analysis of theological issues that are endemic to Christian theology" (p. 11). In this work Bloesch deals with theological method and authority. Future volumes will examine Holy Scripture, the doctrine of God, the person and work of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church and sacraments, and eschatology. When completed, this *magnum opus* will certainly take its place as one of the most significant works of theological scholarship yet produced by an American evangelical.

Bloesch contends that such an enterprise is important because the relativistic milieu in which the Church finds itself has led to a corresponding confusion concerning the meaning of the gospel. This confusion is found in theological circles as well as in the Church. It has produced a number of approaches to theology, ranging from ratio-

nalism to cultural relativism, which have served to sap the vitality of the Church and to cloud its sense of mission. For Bloesch the gospel is an "irreversible revelation from God that transcends every human formulation but is nonetheless inseparable from the New Testament kerygma or evangelical proclamation" (p. 12). It is the movement of God into human history recorded in the Bible and the corresponding movement of God in the personal history of those who believe.

In this work Bloesch attempts to articulate an approach to theology that is responsive to the challenges posed by postmodern culture while maintaining its continuity with the catholic tradition, particularly as this tradition is exhibited in the Protestant Reformation. In the midst of competing methodological options Bloesch sets forth a theology of Word and Spirit that signifies the "unity of truth and power evident in both the Incarnation of God in Jesus Christ and the biblical rendition of this event" (p. 13). The word comes forth from God into human history bringing life to those dead in sin and by the action of the Spirit is communicated throughout the ages through the gospel proclamation. This proclamation is found first in the Bible and then in the reflection of the Church on the Scriptures.

Bloesch sketches out the current theological malaise that has gripped the Church since the Enlightenment, when humanity replaced God as the focal point of theology. This has led to the increasing erosion of transcendent truth and to the emergence of postmodern relativism and religious pluralism. Reacting against these developments Bloesch provides the foundations for a renewal of theology in the postmodern era. He helpfully defines theology as "the systematic reflection within a particular culture on the self-revelation of God in Jesus Christ as attested in Holy Scripture and witnessed to in the tradition of the catholic church" (p. 114). Theology, rooted in history, is both Biblical and contextual and involves the rigorous study of the Word of God along with a serious attempt to relate that Word to a particular cultural context.

For Bloesch a renewed theology is characterized by several important distinctives: It will be evangelical in that it is centered in the gospel of reconciliation and redemption and will have a "pronounced missionary dimension"; it will be catholic in that its outreach will be universal and it will stand in continuity with the tradition of the whole Church; it will be reformed in the sense of being anchored in the Protestant Reformation rediscovery of salvation by grace and in the sense that theology is always reforming itself in the light of the Word of God; it will be pentecostal in the sense of being open to new works of the Holy Spirit; and, finally, it will strive to be orthodox in that it will respect the creedal formulations of the past without becoming bound to them in a "slavish" fashion. In all this, theology must be integrally related to the practice of holiness in life and thought.

In the concluding chapter Bloesch suggests a taxonomy for the varied responses that theology has offered in its attempts to meet the challenges of modernity. The first is a theology of restoration, which is marked by the desire to return to the methods and formulations of the past without seriously engaging with modern trends (Hodge, Warfield, Henry). The second option is a theology of accommodation, which seeks to discern the underlying unity between secular culture and the Christian faith and to develop a "vision of God and the world that can elicit support from all quarters" (Schleiermacher, Hick, Tracy). Third is a theology of correlation, which seeks a synthesis between Christian faith and modernity in which the goal is "to purify the cultural vision without negating it" (Tillich, Küng, Pannenberg). The final option is a theology of confrontation, which accents the antithesis between Christian faith and modern culture. Theology interacts with the presuppositions and values of secular culture, calling them into question and seeking to transform them in the light of divine revelation (Calvin, Barth, Kuyper).

As is often the case with attempts at broad classification, this one is sometimes strained. It serves, however, as a useful means for exploring the crucial question of the relationship between theology and culture. It is clear that Bloesch views the transformational model as the most viable of these options. Throughout the work, Bloesch's primary indebtedness is to Calvin and Barth, who, in his conception, epitomize this model. Although some evangelicals will find the influence of Barth overbearing, this should not prevent a warm reception for this volume, which is the finest effort to date by an evangelical theologian in the area of theological method. If subsequent volumes are of comparable quality, Bloesch's project will become an important milestone in the continuing growth and development of evangelical theology.

John R. Franke
Biblical Theological Seminary, Hatfield, PA

A History of Christianity in Asia. By Samuel Hugh Moffett. Vol. 1: *Beginnings to 1500.* San Francisco: Harper, 1992, 560 pp., n.p.

Moffett is a son and grandson of Presbyterian missionaries in Korea. He taught in China for four years until 1951 and then returned to America to teach at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he is Henry W. Luce professor of ecumenics and mission emeritus. This is the first of his two volumes on Asian Church history.

Early Christians carried the gospel eastward. Some of these, possibly including the apostle Thomas, took Christianity to India, where it has existed ever since. But Moffett's story centers on ancient Persia and the buffer states between it and the Roman empire. After Constantine's conversion, the Catholic Church was closely associated with the government at Constantinople. The third ecumenical council condemned Nestorius in 431, and he fled to the east. Nestorianism became the leading branch of Christianity in Persia, where the Zoroastrians of the Sassanid dynasty eventually recognized Christians as a self-governing community under the Nestorian patriarch. By 635 Nestorian missionaries had spread Christianity across the Old Silk Road as far east as Xian (China).

Nestorian and Orthodox churches affirmed both the deity and humanity of Christ, but many of the pious believed that Christ had only one nature, the divine nature. Orthodox and Nestorian churches alike condemned this monophysite (one nature) doctrine. Persian authorities recognized the Nestorian bishop as head of the Christian community and tried to arrest the monk Jacob, who was the monophysite bishop of Edessa. Jacob eluded authorities by traveling constantly and dressing in rags. Authorities stopped him to ask if he had seen the bishop of Edessa, but Jacob assured them that the bishop had gone the other way. They never suspected that this man in rags was the man they sought. Remembered as Jacob Baradaeus (Patchwork Jacob), he established hundreds of churches, and even today the monophysites are known as Jacobites.

The rise of Islam after 635 halted Christian growth in the Near East. Century after century the strength of Islam grew, but the Nestorian and monophysite communities somehow survived. Crusaders came as liberators from western Europe, and a few eastern Christians welcomed them. But the crusades failed, and the lot of eastern Christians worsened.

During the fourteenth century, Christianity seemed poised for triumph in the Far East. For almost a thousand years Nestorian missionaries had maintained contact with China, and they were now received in imperial circles. The pope even sent representatives to the Mongol emperors. Nestorians continued to work in the Mongol court under Genghis Khan and Tamerlane. Nestorians hoped that these Mongol leaders might

adopt Christianity, that a Constantine might arise in the east who would overthrow the Arabs, liberating the Christians living under Islam.

Instead Tamerlane (1336–1405) invaded the Near East, not as a Christian but as a Moslem. By 1500 Christianity had disappeared from China, barely existed in India, and survived in oppressed communities in the Near East.

Moffett pays special attention to the Nestorians because they were the most vigilant missionaries. Yet by 1500 the Mongols had eradicated the Nestorians. Christianity had never taken root among the Chinese masses, and it quickly disappeared.

Nestorian missionaries engaged in interreligious dialogue, presenting Christianity as a philosophical alternative to Buddhism and Confucianism. Moffett transcribes several documents of the Nestorian mission. Recognizing that some western Christians regard the Nestorian presentation of the gospel as vague, Moffett analyzes the Nestorian documents to show that they indeed present basic Christian teachings. He argues that Nestorians preached the gospel to the Chinese and Mongolians, but his evidence still leaves open the possibility that the message was couched in such ambiguous terms that the gospel was never really heard.

Moffett convinces us that Asian Christianity has a long, worthy, and interesting history. We await the arrival of his second volume.

John Landers

Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN

Responsible Grace: John Wesley's Practical Theology. By Randy L. Maddox. Nashville: Kingswood, 1994, 416 pp., \$19.95.

Schleiermacher claimed that practical theology is the crown jewel in the theological enterprise. Whatever practical theology may have meant for Schleiermacher, for Wesley it was the marrow of divinity; hence, "practical divinity" is the best possible description for Wesley's orientation. Maddox, formerly Nazarene and now United Methodist, goes a great distance toward documenting Wesley's practical acumen in his flexibly titled *Responsible Grace*. Through nine heavily footnoted and carefully argued chapters, Maddox never tires of asserting his primary thesis: God operates graciously, so that humans can respond gratefully.

The most frequently quoted assessment of Wesley's theology is likely that from G. C. Cell's *The Rediscovery of John Wesley*, to the effect that Wesley's theology is an engaging synthesis of the Protestant ethic of grace and the Catholic ethic of holiness. Synthesis was the operative word in A. C. Outler's influential handling of Wesley's theology: synthesis between east and west, spontaneity and structure, faith and works. *Responsible Grace* shows the Outler legacy in two ways: Positively, it could not have been written but for Outler's prior work; negatively, there will probably never again be a Wesley scholar the likes of him.

Outler's two greatest contributions to Wesley studies are likely (1) reading Wesley in light of his sources, most decisively the Anglican ones, causing Outler to esteem Wesley as the greatest Anglican theologian of the eighteenth century, and (2) understanding that the "late" or "mature" Wesley is every bit as worthy of study as the Wesley of Oxford, Georgia, Aldersgate, and the early years of the Methodist revival, and, relatedly, that taken as a whole, significant shifts of emphasis can be noted and described over the course of Wesley's six decades of theological activity. Of these two, Maddox shows considerable interest in the second, demonstrating nuanced changes and subtle adaptations throughout Wesley's lengthy theological career, but little interest in tracing the many—perhaps uncountable—influences upon Wesley's theology. Maddox's insightfully wrought historical settings run a wider gamut—from Christian

antiquity to the Protestant and Catholic Reformations—than just the eighteenth century. These discussions are instructive, but at the same time they lend an oddly ahistorical air to the whole of *Responsible Grace* because of the relative neglect of Wesley's own historical context.

One cannot fault Maddox for not being Outler. Maddox has rendered the impressive and exhausting service of what is likely the most thorough accounting ever of the growing secondary literature rapidly accumulating around Wesley's theology. This Maddox has mastered—in several languages and cultural contexts. Maddox's immersion in both Wesley and the secondary literature, if seemingly not in eighteenth-century British theology, means that *Responsible Grace* is largely a book addressed to the guild of Wesley scholars. This choice, consciously made and reinforced throughout Maddox's text, seems to give the lie to the book's subtitle: *John Wesley's Practical Theology*.

But perhaps not. Maddox's book may be more practical than one thinks at first glance. Throughout the book are sprinkled many excursions, wherein Maddox interrogates Wesley on such contemporary topics as extra-Christian salvation, the theological roots of health and healing, and whether or not Wesley is a prototypical charismatic. Yet, on balance, this book does not succeed as well as it might in bringing Wesley to an audience likely to be his favorite: the practicing Christian in the local church. Wesley as "folk theologian" (Outler) speaking "plain truth for plain people" is present but muted.

Aside from the obviously synthesizing title, whose changes Maddox seems ever eager to ring, *Responsible Grace's* chief mediating claim moves Wesley from west to east. That is, Wesley's view of salvation, perceptively argued by Maddox to be properly the fluid way of salvation (*via salutis*) and not the jumpy, jerky order of salvation (*ordo salutis*), is best seen as therapeutic (Eastern Orthodox) rather than juridical (classical Protestant).

The restrained and dignified tone pervading *Responsible Grace* reiterates Maddox's desire to take his place among Wesley scholars. This work does indeed establish him at or near the top of that growing assembly. But scholarship need not be dispassionate. A more generous measure of "stretched passion" (one writer's evocation of Puritanism) would turn a good book into a great one.

Roderick T. Leupp
Asia-Pacific Nazarene Theological Seminary, Manila, Philippines

Between Reformed Scholasticism and Pan-Protestantism: Jean-Alphonse Turretin (1671–1737) and Enlightened Orthodoxy at the Academy of Geneva. By Martin I. Klauber. Selinsgrove: Susquehanna, 1994, 244 pp., \$39.50.

This is a cardinal work for grasping how the Academy of Geneva made the theological transition from the staunch Calvinism of F. Turretin (1623–87) to a mid-eighteenth-century rationalistic theology advocated by J. Vernet (1698–1789), which called into question doctrines such as the Trinity and the incarnation. Klauber focuses on Turretin's son, J.-A. Turretin (1671–1737), as the major theologian who promoted this remarkably rapid transition, largely by playing down the use of specific doctrines that tended to divide Protestants (such as predestination) and by identifying fundamental articles of belief (such as the Apostles' Creed) to promote unity among those of Reformed, Anglican, and Lutheran persuasion. Though Turretin himself continued to believe in doctrines such as the Trinity and the incarnation, he allowed reason so to dominate his theological enterprise that even these doctrines were made to appear secondary to ethical and pragmatic concerns. Klauber concludes that Turretin

was “not a harbinger of Enlightenment thought, [but] was the author of an enlightened orthodoxy that attempted to square the Christian faith with the methodology of the Enlightenment” (p. 192).

In chap. 1, Klauber addresses the nature of Reformed scholasticism. He supports R. Muller’s thesis that Reformed scholastic theology was primarily soteriological rather than speculative; it involved methodology more than theological substance. The remainder of the opening chapter deals with the theological climate in which Turretin found himself—a climate that served as a primary contributing factor to his rejection of almost everything for which his father had fought. For the younger Turretin, deism, atheism, and Socinianism were far greater threats to Reformed orthodoxy than the doctrines of Saumur and Arminianism.

Chapter 2 addresses Turretin’s education, concentrating on J.-R. Chouet, L. Tronchin and P. Mestrezat. Included is a summary of Turretin’s travels abroad, which encouraged his pursuit of forming a theological system that could be accepted by Protestants of all persuasions.

Klauber’s original research is especially brought to the fore in chaps. 3 and 4, which detail J.-A. Turretin’s development of natural theology and his views on special revelation. In his natural theology, little room was left for the “mysteries of the faith” that defy human reason. Not that he actually substituted reason for divine revelation; rather, he gave rational arguments equal validity with Biblical revelation, arguing that they are in full harmony. Ultimately, natural theology became for him the common ground of reason with atheists and deists to convince them of Christianity’s reasonableness.

Foundational to the relationship of revelation and reason are the issues of religious authority and the witness of the Holy Spirit. Turretin minimized the Holy Spirit’s role in Scripture; external, evidential proofs were used to establish the divinity of Scripture. “He wanted a fideistic acceptance of biblical authority while making a rational defense of the core of religious truth” (p. 12).

In chap. 5, Klauber details the fascinating, at times alarming, history of the demise of Reformed scholasticism and the abrogation of the Helvetic Formula Consensus of 1675. He ably shows how Turretin did much to break down the old scholastic system of education.

A concluding chapter addresses Turretin’s attempt to establish a pan-Protestant union via fundamental articles of belief in which all objectionable doctrines could be virtually ignored. He aimed for the “absolute minimum number of articles in order to allow for the widest possible measure of agreement” (p. 175). The result was that most distinctively Reformed doctrines were denied fundamental status. Predestination and Christ’s presence in the Lord’s supper were no longer relevant. In the end, Turretin’s fundamental articles appear more Arminian than Reformed.

Klauber makes excellent use of French sources in showing that Turretin’s theological convictions were significant not only for the demise of Reformed scholasticism and the history of Calvinism but also for the direction of English latitudinarian theology. Turretin was personally well acquainted with several latitudinarians.

This revised doctoral dissertation, which fills a lacuna in theological-historical research, contains few surprises for those who have been following Klauber’s supplemental research in his articles and addresses. As might be expected, his work is clear and helpful. Each chapter could well stand on its own as a significant contribution. This strength, however, also involves the weakness of occasional repetition, particularly at the commencement of chapters. Nonetheless, Klauber’s theses are ably presented and supported.

Joel R. Beeke
First Netherlands Reformed Congregation, Grand Rapids, MI

Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion. By Nancey C. Murphy. Valley Forge: Trinity Press International, 1994, xvii + 282 pp., n.p.

This book is a useful, integrative tool for seminarians, its primary intended readership. Its principal concern is with methods of reasoning in various disciplines within a seminary context, and it offers a brief introduction to and instructive methodology for these disciplines: homiletics, ethics, history, Biblical studies, theology, philosophy of religion, and apologetics.

The book is divided into three parts: (1) "Basic Reasoning," (2) "Reasoning in Religion," and (3) "The Rationality of Religion." After each chapter are excellent exercises that reinforce the use of proper methodology within these disciplines. Besides being peppered with helpful illustrations and humor, the book includes a wide range of quotations and examples from which Murphy draws: Augustine, Quintilian, Aquinas, Locke, Hume and Pannenberg, for example.

The first part, especially the first three chapters, lays the groundwork for the rest of the book. These chapters address important elements about reasoning, effectively illustrating both their proper use and their misuse: claims (the reasons supplied for a position in an argument) and grounds (which support the claims) of an argument; warrant, which concerns the relevant connection between the grounds and the claims; inductive and deductive reasoning. Chapters 5–6 are informative and practical discussions of "rhetoric and communication" and "academic papers" respectively. Murphy discusses the historical importance of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos* in the former, and, in the latter, important elements in writing papers, the foremost requirement being the making of one claim and arguing for it.

Some highlights from part 2 are as follows: a survey of different types of philosophical and theological ethics with some instructive analysis (e.g., "Anyone who makes utilitarian calculations that *omit* the factor of eternal happiness is thereby assuming the truth of the assertion that the present life is all there is"); important criteria for evaluating the authenticity of historical documents and the recent phenomenon of viewing history naturalistically rather than providentially, which contributed to its becoming a separate discipline from theology; textual criticism in Biblical studies (e.g. preferring the least-harmonized variant, the shorter and more difficult reading).

Part 3 contains chapters about "relating the theological disciplines," "the philosophy of religion," and "apologetics and religious pluralism." The latter two chapters serve as a reminder of the need for Christian collegians and seminarians to come to terms with the significant philosophical and religious influences in the past as well as the present. Murphy whets the appetite for further study in these areas.

Many *JETS* readers will disagree with certain passing, though not inconsequential, remarks. For example, Murphy dismisses "inerrantist accounts of scriptural truth"; this "foundationalist" approach to theology is allegedly ill-conceived. Another point of disagreement is her seemingly incorrect assumption that the Renaissance was a period of turning away from God toward more anthropocentric thinking. This Burkhardtian—and, more recently, Schaefferian—historiography has been decisively refuted by, among others, P. O. Kristellar: "The Renaissance [was] a fundamentally Christian age," in which the study of theology increased, he argues; Renaissance "humanism" was not a philosophical or religious movement but "a literary and scholarly orientation." But again these are only asides.

For Christian colleges and seminaries concerned with "the scandal of the evangelical mind," *Reasoning and Rhetoric in Religion* as a textbook would serve as excellent required reading for all of their students.

Paul Copan
Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI

Gods of This Age or . . . God of the Ages. By Carl F. H. Henry. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, 323 pp., \$15.99 paper.

This fine work is a collection of recent lectures by Henry, lectures that are both an evaluation and description of Christianity in western culture at the end of the twentieth century and a pointed witness to the decay of the culture in which western believers now live. The twenty-four lectures are categorized under five headings: "The Struggle for the Soul of a Nation," "Toward an Education that Matters," "Maintaining Evangelical Integrity," "Contemporary Theology and the Battle of the Gods," "Looking Forward, Looking Back." While the original audiences and topics vary throughout the work, the theme of Henry's life's work pervades: "Evangelical Christians dare not isolate themselves from the cultural mainstream. They are obliged to call human beings everywhere to a personal salvific experience of Christ, to declare also all humanity's answerability to the God of history, and to proclaim the standards by which the returning Lord will decisively judge the social and cultural developments of all nations by the criteria of revealed religion" (p. 176).

Although none of the material is novel to readers familiar with the voluminous literature on the clash of Christianity and culture in the west, Henry's lectures repeatedly challenge believers to be "leaven, salt, and light" in whatever realm God places them. The lectures are especially poignant in the chapters on Christianity and education. These four chapters comprehensively treat the root crises facing Christian students, educators, administrators, and institutional trustees. Henry eloquently pleads for theological literacy and a return to the core values upon which a classical western education was once based. This theological literacy is the basis for responsible leadership and is the paramount requirement for educators as well as members of boards of trustees. He also pushes for a truly Christian education based upon reflective thought and interaction with the ancient sages of Greece and Rome as they declare the bankruptcy of naturalism, the same naturalism that pervades all aspects of western thought and life today. If undergraduates understand and grapple Biblically with the arguments of the pagan ancients, then they will be better equipped to take the gospel to their world (p. 169). While his proposal is commendable, I think Henry overestimates the ability and discipline of the average college student. Few arrive in college capable of rudimentary critical thinking, and even fewer with the discipline to read literature such as this.

The book is filled with well-worded presentations of the challenges facing Christianity in the west today. While most chapters are lucidly and tightly written, the overall unity of the book is somewhat precarious. One lecture will describe the precipice upon which the west finds itself, and another will caution the reader not to forget that only history will tell us whether we were near collapse or merely in the midst of a temporary downturn. Nevertheless, Henry has accurately appraised "humanism's decline into raw naturalism" resulting in "barbaric patterns of thought and life" (p. 198), as well as the "costly 'cognitive bargaining'" (p. 158) in which evangelicals are engaged as they respond to that worldview. The book aptly ends with a ringing challenge based upon an exposition of Paul's departing imperatives to Timothy. Henry rightly notes these imperatives must be ours if we humanly hope to insure the transmission of the faith.

Thomas J. Marinello
Emmaus Bible College, Dubuque, IA

The Openness of God: A Biblical Challenge to the Traditional Understanding of God.
By Clark Pinnock *et al.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994, 202 pp., n.p. paper.

Throughout the history of the Christian tradition, the majority opinion has been that God stands supremely transcendent, so transcendent in fact that he is completely independent of its influence. God is sufficiently removed from the temporal order that his knowledge of all events, future, past and present, is exhaustive, even meticulous. As to his power, God is absolute, able to do anything, for the created order is a passive vassal to his will. Nothing takes him by surprise, and nothing thwarts his plan. He exercises such control over the universe that we can always be assured that "everything in our lives happens in precise accordance with God's will" (p. 15).

But is this truly the Biblical picture of either God or the way he governs creation and relates to historical events? C. Pinnock, R. Rice, J. Sanders, W. Hasker, and D. Basinger present a challenge to the traditional, what Sanders calls "the theologically correct," view, one that has dominated western thought since the Greeks. Writing from several disciplinary perspectives, the writers have put together a truly collaborative, highly readable, and thought-provoking proposal for an alternative view of God and history.

Undoubtedly thinking that some might accuse them of being influenced by process thought, a number of the contributors are careful to distinguish their open or dynamic view of God from that of process theology (pp. 93–94, 112–113, 138–140). In the latter, divine transcendence is either so muted or outrightly denied that God is indistinguishable from the creaturely and the temporal. These authors insist, however, upon God's ontological independence from his creation. The creation is a voluntary work of God and can always be distinguished from God. Yet, contra the view of God that Christian theology adopted from Greek natural theology, the writers argue that God enters into a reciprocal relationship with creation. He is not an immutable and impassible force who disinterestedly imposes his will upon a helpless creation, but rather a loving parent who freely enters into partnership with his world, a personal deity who opens himself up to the risks of history.

The work's proposal is both polemical and constructive. The polemical argument harkens back to the Biblical theology movement of the 1940s and 50s and its criticisms of scholastic theological method, a method that used an abstract definition of deity as a grid through which it forced the Biblical revelation of God. As in the Biblical theology movement, the historical onus for the traditional view of God is placed upon Greek philosophy's quest for that which escapes the ravages of time and decay and the early Church's apologetic synthesis of Greek philosophical categories and Biblical insights (pp. 59–82). Yet there are no easy distinctions between the Greek and Biblical minds and no demonization of philosophy here. While the authors do tend to affirm a descriptive over against a definitional or speculative reading of the Biblical materials, it is a descriptive reading that has ontological relevance. While the Biblical depiction of God is philosophically relevant, there is little in that portrayal that would lead us to believe that its intent is definitional or essentialistic.

A good example here is the notion of immutability. The authors suggest that the Biblical references to God's changelessness are declarations concerning God's character in relation to his creation rather than propositions about his existence. Thus the Biblical point falls upon divine faithfulness rather than some abstract notion of essential immutability. Yet God is ontologically changeless in his nature and existence. Far from dismissing the category of immutability, the authors disallow a static notion of essential immutability from running roughshod over the Biblical insight that God is open to his creation and is responsive to it (pp. 47–49, 117). As Pinnock puts it:

“God is changeless in nature, but his nature is that of a creative person who interacts. God’s immutability does not rule out God’s responsiveness” (p. 118).

Pinnock and his colleagues challenge us to think about how we think about God. Do we think about God in abstraction, independent of his relationships, or do we think about God in relationship? And do we take God’s relating as an element of our depiction of him? The authors contend that the Biblical picture of things clearly leads us to affirm the latter. Thus any effort to attend to the doctrine of God will also entail a concerted reflection upon his works and relationships, especially his historical relationship to humanity as it is revealed and recorded in Scripture.

What the authors are arguing for, it seems to me, is not first of all an open view of God, but an open—bilateral—view of history. If history is the product of both divine and human decision and action, and if historical relationships have meaning for both God and humanity such that God influences his creatures and they him, then we can ask: “What sort of God relates in such a way?” The authors’ answer is that such a God is not “an aloof monarch, removed from the contingencies of the world, unchangeable in every aspect of being, an all-determining and irresistible power, aware of everything that will ever happen and never taking risks,” but rather “a caring parent with qualities of love and responsiveness, generosity and sensitivity, openness and vulnerability, a person (rather than a metaphysical principle) who experiences the world, responds to what happens, relates to us and interacts dynamically with humans” (p. 103). Thus the conceptual model for understanding the God-world relationship is not the court of an aloof oriental potentate who carelessly imposes his decree upon a hapless vassal, but rather a familial or marital bond in which agents respond according to the actions and needs of other agents.

Obviously such traditional categories as sovereignty, omniscience and omnipotence must be rethought if history has meaning for God and if humans make meaningful historical decisions. Under the openness model, God’s sovereignty is not domination of the historical process such that all events are but puppetlike outworkings of an immutable decree. And “God’s plans are not cast-iron molds to which the course of history passively and perfectly conforms” (p. 37). The authors argue that a God who governs unilaterally via an eternal decree is actually less than truly sovereign, for he must stack the deck or rig the system in order to see his intentions fulfilled. Is it possible that God is so sovereign, so comfortable in his power and purpose, that he “makes room for others,” that he is flexible enough that he can manage a universe in which his is not the only voice? Is it possible that God can guide things to his promised *telos* despite the presence of other historical contributors, even contributors hostile to his intentions? In that light, the scholastic and medieval view of God as a transcendent perfection removed from and untouchable by the world is not a high view of God or his power, but a diminution of it.

The classical divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence take their knocks under the open view of God. Omniscience, understood as an exhaustive knowledge of all things and events, is affirmed regarding the past and present, but denied regarding the future. Contra Aquinas, the authors contend that God’s knowledge of the world is not independent of the world in such a way that it is thoroughly uncaused by the world. If the future is totally known by God, the future is closed, and thus is in fact caused or determined by God. All attempts to suggest otherwise have proven to be little more than parlor tricks (p. 114, 134–137). The majority tradition’s attempt to preserve the notion of divine foreknowledge via compatibilism or middle knowledge is finally a huge exercise in the irrelevant (p. 163).

It seems to me that the contributors to *The Openness of God* have not sufficiently answered why God is not omniscient concerning the future. Their answer is set within the classical sovereignty/free-will problematic. Typically one absolutizes one pole (ei-

ther the human and free will or the divine and sovereignty) and then defines the other pole in terms of the first. Or to turn it around: One seeks to find some crawl space for the weaker notion in terms of an hegemony of the stronger. That method is followed here as well. If God created human beings as free historical agents ("free" here meaning uncoerced outside of whatever historical and biological necessities pertain to a given situation), God may know the natures and contexts of human agents in such a way that he is able to predict their choices but he cannot possess exhaustive knowledge of how they will exercise that freedom. Clearly the controlling stricture here is the freedom of the human agent. This alone is enough to garner an "Arminian" attributive description for the project.

The doctrine of election gets little more than honorable mention (p. 56). While a complete discussion of election is beyond the scope of the book, some treatment of it would have been appropriate, and the authors should have provided some indication of where their thinking lies. Perhaps some clue is given in the way a few of the authors, especially Hasker, caricature Calvinism. "The central idea of Calvinism," according to Hasker, "is quite simple: everything that happens, with no exceptions, is efficaciously determined by God in accordance with his eternal decrees" (p. 141). The God-man relationship is thus one of a puppetmaster pulling the strings on a marionette, for human historical involvement and responsibility "is irrelevant to the efficacious divine decrees postulated by Calvinism" (p. 142). This devil-God is the unilateral cause of all events. "Calvinism asserts that, unconstrained by any requirement other than his own will, God has deliberately chosen to cause all of the horrible evils that afflict our world" (p. 152). Calvinism, then, is a synonym for raw determinism. Yet the authors admit that both Aquinas and Luther were theological determinists (e.g. p. 158). I argue that both men were more unrelenting in their deterministic tendencies than was Calvin. So why is Calvinism bashed this way? I suggest that Hasker is able to find very few Calvinists who affirm that "unconstrained by any requirement other than his own will, God has deliberately chosen to cause all of the horrible evils that afflict our world." Hasker has constructed a cheap straw man. Few Reformed theologians affirm his "central idea of Calvinism." A more positive view of Calvinism, or at least of Calvin himself, is supplied by Sanders when he notes that Calvin, like Luther, was attempting to move beyond the speculative theological method of medieval scholasticism toward a more Biblical and relational understanding of things (p. 87-89). It would truly be unfortunate if the contribution of the authors were to reduce their project to a name-calling contest. Surely the issue here is larger than, or at least different from, a debate between decretalist Calvinists and Pelagian humanists.

Those of us who call ourselves Calvinists have sometimes trafficked in the word-plays and language-bending that allow us to affirm an immutable and prescient decree that knows and governs all events while rejecting determinism. Yet I am not convinced that an affirmation of responsible and uncoerced human agency necessitates that we throw away the classical confession that God transcends the temporal and spatial horizons in ways far beyond our ken, and thus is sovereign even over human moral freedom. Hasker's unilateralist caricature of Calvinism demonstrates the failing of the book, at both a Biblical and theological level. The Biblical notion of covenant is noticeably missing throughout the discussion. I suggest that a stronger version of bilateral historical agency would be available to us if we employed a Biblical model of covenantal relationship. Rather than beginning with one pole and moving toward the other, a covenantal approach suggests that we begin with the relationship of the two and then describe each in terms of its relationship to the other (e.g. Calvin's starting point in the *Institutes* [1.1]). A covenantal approach automatically moves one away from the abstractive and reductive problems of both a scholastic Calvinism and a humanistic Arminianism.

Contra the straw man Calvinism of Hasker, I offer this comment on the covenant from S. G. De Graaf: "Without covenant, there is no religion, no conscious fellowship between man and God, no exchange of love and faithfulness. Without the covenant, man would be just an instrument in God's hand. When God created man he had more than an instrument in mind: he made a creature that could respond to him. Only if man is capable of responding would he be able to assume his position as partner in the covenant. Without a covenant, God would have only claims and man only obligations. But as soon as God gave man a promise, man also had a claim on God, namely, to hold God to that promise" (*Promise and Deliverance* 1.36). In the covenant relation, the greater limits his own scope of activity for the sake of the responsibilities of the lesser, and both must be understood in terms of that relationship. Let me apply this to the question of omnipotence: Hasker's philosophical essay defines omnipotence as God's ability to perform all action that is consistent with his nature and logically possible (p. 135). Yet this definition is both an abstraction and, I suggest, simply wrong. I can imagine many things that God cannot do that are logically possible and perhaps consistent with his nature. The fact is, there are many things God cannot do. God cannot change the rules of redemption in such a way that upon the day of judgment he declares that all persons born between 5 a.m. and 5 p.m. on the 5th of July, AD 1145, are saved not by the blood of Jesus but the wearing of kilts while gardening. The reason is the covenant. What God can do is irrelevant. What God promises to do, that is the thing. Is God omnipotent? Not in any abstract, definitional, or philosophical sense. The power of God must be spoken of in the context of his covenantal binding of himself to his promise, even as we confess that God transcends his own covenant limitation of himself for the sake of his creation.

The Calvinism painted by the authors is little more than deism. Thus they should not be surprised if we Calvinists were to return the favor and dismiss their effort as pantheism. H. Bavinck was right when he rejected both extremes. Biblical religion neither enshrines God above the cares of our world nor confuses him with it. Rather, Scripture "maintains both truths: God is infinitely great and condescendingly good. He is the Sovereign, but also Father. He is the Creator, but also archetypal. In a word, he is the God of the covenant" (*Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 2.531).

The Openness of God raises important questions for how we think about God and engage in the theological enterprise, but it shoots itself in the foot by employing the remonstrant critique of the Reformed tradition. That critique keeps the authors from moving beyond the unilateralist polarities of the remonstrance-Canons of Dort debate of the early seventeenth century. Important projects are often as flawed as they are provocative and insightful. I hope that the resurrected ghosts of a debate no one could win do not keep the book from being appreciated for its contribution to the theological discussion. Whether or not the authors finally convince on every point, this work should open a lively debate in the areas of theology proper, theological method, and Christian conceptions of history. It would make a fine text in any of these areas.

Michael Williams

Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

The Gagging of God. By D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 640 pp., 1996, \$24.99.

God has been gagged, protests a contemporary evangelical scholar alert to the new hermeneutic and radical religious pluralism. In a penetrating and vigorous volume, Carson turns the tables on the postmodernist trend and warns that an emergence of

“postmodernist evangelicals” may reflect how easily some Christian conservatives may be seduced by a flawed epistemology.

Carson’s sizable tome offers serious-minded Christians the equivalent of a summer course in contemporary theology at a bargain price. The volume challenges the notion that scholars must choose between evangelical identity and robust theology.

Against religious modernism the last generation’s neo-orthodoxy insisted that God not only speaks but ongoingly reveals himself, albeit not in truths. This “speaking God” has now been tautly muzzled by a pernicious pluralism that relies on the new hermeneutic and deconstructionism to shape a defection from Biblical theology worse than its predecessors. At the same time postmodernists unwittingly prepare the way for their own destruction.

Impressively well read, Carson indexes almost 1000 names, including many evangelicals whose views he candidly assesses, and lists thousands of references and important quotations also along with an extensive bibliography. The work has philosophical as well as exegetical strength and yet is readable.

Carson discusses evangelical-Catholic agreements and differences. He approves evangelical political engagement if sobered by the awareness that the decisive triumph of right will be eschatological and by insistence on evangelism and on the centrality of the Church, and that there is danger in divorcing kingdom work from proclamation of the gospel. He thinks the statement “Evangelicals and Catholics Together” was theologically confusing, though Christians must challenge an un-Christian political philosophy.

God is gagged, Carson declares, when he is denied the possibility of disclosing objective truth textually (and especially in Scripture). Frontier theology invents “new ways of . . . silencing him, of marginalizing or dismissing his revelation,” yet he still speaks by his Spirit through the Word.

Among the costly signs of accelerating cultural decay Carson names the multiplying view that all convictions are socially determined preferences. The pluralists who challenge confessing Christians must not themselves be allowed to escape the attack on authority.

Carson offers a powerful presentation of the authority and inerrancy of Scripture alongside a refutation of critical comments. But he is not content to emphasize Scriptural inerrancy, insisting that those who invoke the new hermeneutic to eliminate portions they disbelieve are intellectually obliged to indicate the grounds on which they so emphatically retain what they prefer. He also indicates how conflicting pluralists handle the Biblical text, in some instances twisting the intention of Scripture to support pluralism.

Carson sketches the Bible’s plot line and suggests turning points for an effective Christian worldview, which must be opposed to postmodernism’s insistence on the relativity of all truth-claims, from which the relativists seek to exempt themselves. He stresses that systematic theology must be pursued in closer relationships with Biblical theology and the canon, but concedes that even Biblical theologians are not beyond “trawling” through Scripture to reinforce preferred emphases.

As strengths of postmodernism, Carson cites the emphasis that we all do theology in some respect within our own culture, and notes that valid insights of the new hermeneutic can be used without yielding to extreme relativism. The community plays an important though not decisive role in an individual’s understanding. But confessional Christianity “cannot wholly embrace either modernity or postmodernity,” though it “must learn certain lessons from both.”

Carl F. H. Henry
Watertown, WI

Hell: The Logic of Damnation. By Jerry L. Walls. Notre Dame: Notre Dame, 1992, 182 pp., \$26.95/\$12.95.

Walls makes an important philosophical contribution to the ongoing discussions concerning hell. He claims that evangelicals are caught in a dilemma: Jesus' teaching constrains them to believe in the traditional doctrine of hell, but modern culture regards the notion of hell as morally repugnant. Walls writes, therefore, to demonstrate that some traditional views of hell are intellectually and morally defensible.

In chap. 1 Walls notes that the data of belief/unbelief in hell have been used both to justify and refute the doctrine of hell. He defines what a morally credible belief in hell is: "A person really believes in hell only if the doctrine actually seems true to him and he can sincerely affirm it" (p. 31).

Walls (in chap. 2) studies hell and God's foreknowledge. He summarizes the main options in the debate over foreknowledge and examines how these options influence the concept of hell. He rejects Calvinism because it fails to preserve a libertarian view of human freedom and exacerbates the moral problem of hell. Molinism, which emphasizes God's middle knowledge, fails to explain how God could know the future undetermined choices of free creatures. After surveying other views, Walls concludes: "Questions about God's perfect goodness remain, then, no matter which view of foreknowledge one embraces" (p. 53).

The third chapter concerns hell and God's omnipotence. Walls considers both Calvinism and universalism. Calvinism affirms God's absolute sovereignty. It also seeks to affirm human freedom and divine goodness, but in Walls' estimation fails in both attempts. Walls deems a Calvinist compatibilist notion of freedom unacceptable; only libertarian freedom will do. And Calvinists cannot establish their claim that God is sovereign and good because, if he is absolutely sovereign, and hence able to save all persons, but will not do so, "it is hard to see how he could be thought loving, just, or good" (p. 68). Universalism fares no better. Indeed, J. Hick's arguments for universalism are inconsistent and confused. Like Calvinism, universalism fails to attain its goals when it attempts to affirm both God's ability to save anyone and human freedom. In the end it makes controversial assumptions about God's goodness. Walls' own view, distinct from Calvinism and universalism, is consistently to maintain libertarian freedom. When this is done, "it will be recognized that God's ability to bring about certain states of affairs is contingent upon the choices of free creatures" (p. 81).

Walls considers hell and God's goodness in chap. 4. He follows Wesley in defining God's goodness as his love that wants all persons to accept salvation. One again Walls finds Calvinism and Molinism inadequate. His own conception of God's goodness entails God's being "willing to do everything he can, short of destroying freedom, to save all persons." This involves his giving "to each person whatever is the optimal measure of grace for that person" (p. 88). This, in turn, entails God's granting each one full opportunity to make a decisive response to God's grace. Walls defines a decisive response as "a settled response which is made by one fully informed on the Christian faith" (p. 89). It is, however, obvious that all human beings do not receive the optimal measure of grace in this life so as to make a decisive response to the gospel. Walls' solution to this problem deserves full quotation: "If there can be no opportunity to receive grace at or beyond the point of death, then it seems most likely that grace is not, and perhaps cannot be, optimally bestowed on all persons. But if God can extend grace beyond this life, it can be plausibly held that he will do so, until all have had full opportunity to receive it. . . . If we cannot maintain this, we cannot sustain the claim that God does everything possible to save all persons, short of destroying anyone's freedom. If God does less for some persons to bring about their salvation, he does not fully desire their happiness. And if there are some persons whose happiness God does

not fully desire, his perfect goodness is compromised. So God's perfect goodness does seem to entail that he fully desires the salvation of all persons and will therefore give all an optimal measure of grace" (pp. 92–93).

Walls next tackles seven objections to his proposed solution. I mention only one: In light of his proposal, what is an adequate motive for Christian missions? Walls' view of divine goodness compels him to reject the traditional missionary motivation—the conviction that all who do not believe the gospel in this life will be lost. In its place he puts the idea that those who have experienced fulfillment through believing the gospel will want to share it with others so they too can gain "human fulfillment and happiness" as soon as possible (p. 95).

Chapter 5 concerns hell and human freedom. Here Walls defines freedom in libertarian terms and seeks to show that the idea that people freely choose hell is intelligible. He argues that there is such a thing as a decisive choice of evil. The Nazi Goebbels and the unrepentant rich man in the parable (with Lazarus) in Luke 16:19–31 are examples. Walls suggests that those who end up in hell get what they want by a kind of self-inflicted deception. God cannot remove our capacity for self-deception without violating our freedom, something he would never do. Hence it is conceivable for free creatures to choose hell over heaven. Walls gives two reasons for rejecting annihilationism: "One can maintain that the seriousness of our moral freedom rules this out, or one can propose reasons for thinking the damned do not want extinction" (p. 138).

In chap. 6 Walls addresses the topic of hell and human misery and asks the question: What is the nature of the suffering in hell? Historically some have played up the physical suffering in hell and played down the spiritual suffering, while others have done the opposite. Regardless of such diversity, the majority tradition agrees with Aquinas that hell is a place of utmost misery from which there is never any relief. Walls agrees with this traditional view as well as with the idea that hell involves physical as well as spiritual pain. His rationale for doing so is instructive: "My reason for this involves an appeal to the traditional Christian belief that the damned as well as the blessed will be resurrected in their bodies" (p. 151). Walls thus endorses a traditional view of hell as a place of misery, but he rejects the gruesome features of hell found in some classical accounts.

In a brief conclusion Walls acknowledges that theologians who reject the Bible as the primary authority for their theology will not be constrained to believe in the existence of hell. Those who accept the Bible, however, will not be able to disregard the Biblical picture of hell. Instead, some will attempt to show that this picture is compatible with universalism. They encounter a grave problem, however, for the weight of the Church's tradition heavily favors the view that there is an eternal hell. Walls lays the burden of proof at the feet of the universalists: "Why have so many Fathers of the Church down through the ages completely misinterpreted what scripture plainly teaches at this point?" (p. 158). Plainly, universalists will have to offer philosophical arguments to make a case that the traditional view of hell fails on intellectual or moral grounds. But Walls has written this volume to show that that case has yet to be made.

There is much to commend in this volume. Walls is a careful thinker. He insists on accurate definitions of terms, consistently interacts with key players in the various debates, always presents the thoughts of others fairly, and writes clearly. His philosophical reasoning is precise, nuanced and cogent, given his presuppositions. He has left his mark on future discussions concerning the philosophical problems with believing in a traditional view of hell.

In spite of these strengths, there are weaknesses. Chief among them is the fact that the key to his proposal, the idea that many persons will be given an opportunity

to be saved after death, will not pass muster Biblically. Although Walls is joined by D. Bloesch, C. Pinnock, and G. Fackre in advocating postmortem evangelism, the Scriptures simply do not teach it. Instead they limit the opportunity for salvation to this life. Even if one concedes that 1 Pet 3:19 teaches that Jesus gave a second chance to those who perished in the great flood (which I do not concede), this would not establish the doctrine of postmortem encounter. Rather, as M. Erickson points out, "even if that view is accepted, it takes care of only those few people. It says nothing about others who lived since that time or will live in the future" ("Is There Opportunity for Salvation after Death?", *BSac* 152 [April-June 1995] 142).

This lack of Scriptural support for Walls' major thesis raises a larger issue: that of method. What is the proper relation of philosophy to systematic theology? What responsibility does the Christian philosopher bear to Biblical exegesis? Walls never addresses these questions directly in his book, but he does drop a few hints. It is certainly Walls' right to limit the scope of his book to philosophical theology, as he does. Is he not accountable, however, to exegetical theology for his conclusions concerning all manner of matters theological? It will not do for him simply to assert: "This is neither a historical nor an exegetical essay, although I intend the conclusions I defend to be compatible with the results of careful biblical exegesis" (p. 15). Good intentions notwithstanding, Walls too often fails to guide his philosophical explorations by the compass of Holy Writ.

Finally, is Walls whistling in the dark when he claims that the idea of a chance for salvation after death will not adversely affect world evangelization (pp. 94-96)? The question Walls puts to universalism returns to haunt him at this point: "Why have so many Fathers of the Church down through the ages completely misinterpreted what scripture plainly teaches at this point?" I contend that the fathers and missionaries have not misinterpreted Scripture. On the contrary, they rightly understood that a major motivation for Jesus' and his apostles' preaching hell is to move believers to tell the good news to those who, if they die in their sins, are eternally lost.

Robert A. Peterson

Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO

Law and Morality: Friends or Foes? By John Warwick Montgomery. Luton: University of Luton, 1994, 32 pp., n.p. paper.

In this very short book legal scholar and theologian J. W. Montgomery presents some compelling arguments for the proposition that moral principles are an essential part of a proper legal system. In doing so he rejects both Kantian philosophy and legal positivism, which argue that law is merely the command of the sovereign and should be defined entirely without reference to moral values.

Montgomery begins by showing that morals have had a great impact upon law. For example, commercial law in the United States imposes an obligation of good faith and honesty in the performance of contracts. Similarly the law of quasicontract is simply a legal device used to prevent a person from being unjustly enriched at the expense of another. Other such examples can be found in the law of estates and criminal law. Interestingly Montgomery also notes that law has often had an influence upon morals, especially in the development of women's rights.

The heart of Montgomery's argument turns on this question: If moral principles are essential to the proper functioning of law, where are proper moral principles to be discovered? Montgomery argues that in order to avoid the pitfalls of relativism, mor-

als must have a transcendental source. And since there are numerous claims of divine truth in our world, the proper test of any transcendental claim must be its historical facticity: It must offer concrete, verifiable evidence that God has come into our midst. For Montgomery, only historic Christianity and its revelational source (the Bible) meet this test.

Montgomery recognizes that his position could lead to intolerance, the forcing of Christian ethical principles upon those in a secular society who are not believers. The problem can be solved as long as the Christian distinguishes between the first and second tables of the Decalogue. The first table, which concerns one's relationship with God, must never be forced on unbelievers, even if Christians are in the majority. The second table, which deals with relationships with our fellowman, can be used to create and maintain an honorable rule of law in secular society.

Montgomery concludes that law and morality must be friends and that Christians can and should use Biblical law in the reformation of society. He maintains that while the boundaries of Biblical morality are not always clear, they certainly embrace the right to life, preservation of marriage and the nuclear family, condemnation of hardcore pornography, and opposition to homosexual practices.

In this book, the reader finds Montgomery at his best. He presents cogent and well-researched arguments that take into account opposing viewpoints. However, the book is not much more than a general outline of Montgomery's position. In order fully to understand and appreciate Montgomery's thought, the reader must consult his other apologetic and historical works, some of which are listed in the footnotes. But despite its brevity, this book contains some very good reasons why Christian morality should have a place in the law of nations.

David C. Jarratt
Concordia University, Mequon, WI

Welfare Reformed: A Compassionate Approach. Edited by David W. Hall. Pittsburgh/Franklin: Presbyterian and Reformed/Legacy, 1994, n.p.

The pathetically excessive rhetoric common to many discussions concerning welfare reform points to the need for thoughtful discourse and rational solutions. *Welfare Reformed: A Compassionate Approach* offers both. This book provides trenchant insight into the existing crisis, Biblical principles that should undergird any true reform plan, and several historical models from Church history that illustrate how the body of Christ has helped the needy in the past.

With characteristic forcefulness, R. J. Neuhaus exposes the disaster facing the United States in irrefutable terms. Over 60 percent of poor families with children are led by single mothers, notes Neuhaus, and yet 38 percent of those the federal government classifies as poor own homes. These striking statistics emphasize both the personal high cost and the mind-boggling inequity inherent in the current system.

D. W. Hall himself provides four of the 11 essays. His "post-statist theological analysis of poverty" is a biting indictment of how we got into our present situation and what questions must be asked in order to extricate ourselves from it. He also provides very useful data concerning the role of the Church, both Reformed and Catholic, in the late middle ages. Hall and fellow contributor G. Grant (in a valuable essay diminished a bit by excessive proof-texting) investigate how the Bible speaks to the causes and cures of impoverishment.

D. Bandow, M. Bauman, R. C. Sproul and R. C. Sproul, Jr., describe, in separate essays, the failure of the existing system. Their essays overlap a bit, and the piece on statism by the Sprouls is, while useful, perhaps a bit too introductory. Still there is much to be garnered here regarding the collapse of redistribution-based welfare assistance.

In the section on the Bible and poverty, Grand and Hall are joined by the unusually penetrating C. Beisner, whose essay, "Poverty: A Problem in Need of a Definition," uses economic and demographic data to cripple and in some instances demolish existing preconceptions about who really is poor.

The final section, "Another Reformation: Historical Models," is a study of how the Reformed and Catholic traditions each provide illustrations of how the Church has taken seriously its role in caring for the poor in history (the role of the diaconate in Calvin's Geneva, for example) and how, in the late 19th century, Christian faith inspired figures as diverse as Kuyper, H. C. Lodge and Pope Leo XIII to articulate a compassionate but nonstatist vision of charity and social improvement. This section also contains an essay by physician F. E. Payne on the relationship between welfare and medical care. Payne's essay is invigorated by justifiable anger with the consequences of the "medicine as a right" philosophy. Yet he may carry his point rather far in arguing that, for example, AIDS sufferers deserve care but not necessarily medical treatment because of past immorality. Although Payne does not directly advocate a theocracy, this seems to be an undercurrent in his thinking (he bases part of his argument on G. DeMar's *Ruler of the Nations*). I find it troubling that those needing medical attention would, under his schema, be denied such by a humanly-run state.

Finally, in what he calls a "non-theological postscript," Hall summarizes the conclusions of the book and lists 13 Biblical principles found in the welfare reform plans instituted in states such as Wisconsin and Michigan. The book contains an appendix called the "Oak Ridge Affirmations and Denials" (named for the location of the conference) that presents a series of Biblically-based tenets concerning just and compassionate treatment of the poor.

This book provides a devastating analysis of the present system, lessons from our Christian forebears, and sound Scriptural prescriptions both for the Church and the state about how to address poverty in our time.

Rob Schwarzwalder
Alexandria, VA

Medical Ethics: An Introduction. By Kenneth Kearon. Mystic: Twenty-Third, 1995, 110 pp., \$9.95 paper.

In this short book Kearon raises many of the most important medical/legal issues facing us today: euthanasia, abortion, assisted conception, AIDS, and the relationship of law and morality. Unfortunately he provides us with very few answers. For example, in the discussion of abortion he briefly presents four different arguments that are often made by the participants in the dialogue, but he offers no conclusions other than "the status of the embryo is central to the morality of the abortion." Furthermore, even though he is the rector of a parish in Ireland and a lecturer in the theological college of the Church of Ireland, he neither discusses nor cites Scripture in the book. There are several references to Christian and non-Christian ethicists, but the discussions are so short that they are not very helpful.

Perhaps the strongest parts of the book are the discussions about the allocation of scarce resources and the AIDS epidemic. In the former he draws some conclusions based upon the basic equality of all human beings and the equal right to life we all

possess. In the latter he disagrees with “fringe fundamentalist groups” who see AIDS as an expression of the wrath of God. Instead he calls for a Christian response of care, compassion, and justice for those suffering from AIDS. This contrasts with his failure to draw any conclusions on the questions of abortion, euthanasia, and the relationship of law and morality.

At best this book defines some of the basic ethical issues faced by society and the medical profession. But it is simply too brief to serve as a basic text for an ethics course or to provide a satisfying discussion of these critical issues for the educated reader.

David C. Jarratt
Concordia University, Mequon, WI

Citizen Christians: The Rights and Responsibilities of Dual Citizenship. Edited by Richard D. Land and Louis A. Moore. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, 136 pp., n.p. paper. *No Longer Exiles: The New Religious Right in American Politics.* Edited by Michael Cromartie. Washington: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1993, 153 pp., \$18.95 paper.

The role of Christians in society and politics is a crucial topic of discussion, largely because many of us are worried about what is going on in our world. These two small books each make valuable contributions to the discussion. *Citizen Christians* arises from a seminar of the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission and contains essays by Southern Baptist leaders and invited guests. *No Longer Exiles* arises from a conference on the Christian Right sponsored by the Ethics and Public Policy Center and contains articles by leading scholars about the New Right with insightful responses from activists and scholars. To encourage you to read one or both, I shall summarize some of their observations about American culture, the corrections of misunderstandings of the role of religion in society, and some assessments of the Christian Right.

The New Right has to be understood as a response to a widespread loss of values and moral decay in America. Forty percent of American children are conceived before their mother's first marriage. Over 60% of American kids have a single-parent home. Although most Americans believe that God exists and that Jesus is his Son, for practical purposes the greatest source of spiritual/intellectual nourishment for our land comes from sexually obsessed TV programs. Most Americans do not believe in sin or absolute truth. Moral absolutes might be held privately, but they are not discussed publicly because religious ideas are the second-class citizens of the land of ideas. Vast amounts of violence and drug abuse characterize our culture.

In recent generations we have attempted to have a religiously neutral public square based on the Enlightenment myth of neutrality. But now we can see that government policies and court rulings are often based on religious assumptions. Because so few of our intellectual elite can honestly affirm that we are endowed by our Creator with inalienable rights, basic human rights like freedom of religion are being eroded by a regulatory state. Sadly the Church confronting this situation is largely undisciplined and Biblically illiterate.

To address our situation we need to overcome some misunderstandings among Christians. A proper separation of Church and state does not mean that religious people should not debate current public issues from a Christian moral basis. Even R. Williams, one of the first great spokesmen for the separation of Church and state, was vehemently involved in debates about the proper treatment of native Americans from the perspective of Christian ethics. Indeed a constitutional separation of Church and state does not require a completely secularized state, as is evidenced by the way some

particular states maintained state churches well after the Constitution was ratified. Early government buildings were often decorated with Christian symbols and sayings. In fact the limited mention of religion in the Constitution probably arises from a recognition of the importance of religion, not from any thought that religion is insignificant. And of course a proper institutional separation of Church and state does not separate society very broadly from Christian moral evaluation. Throughout most of America's history religion has played a large role in politics and public life generally, even if that role was not so visible for a short time before the arousal of the New Right.

But this focus on the state and politics must not blind us to the fact that our problems are more at the level of what is valued by our culture than at the level of politics in a narrow sense. Changing politics without changing the culture will have very little effect.

How one assesses the New Right depends heavily on the assumptions of the person making the assessment. R. B. Fowler thinks the New Christian Right has failed badly. The marks of failure are the inability to shape public opinion and the lack of government policies that reflect the New Right's social agenda. C. Henry does not think it has been a complete failure because the standard is obedience to God, not world triumph. Yet he thinks many Christian conservatives have had exaggerated expectations of what can be accomplished by legislative means and have also substituted histrionic media one-liners for formulating and applying a persuasive public philosophy in a truly Christian manner. G. Wiegel asks: "Half Full or Half Empty?" Granted the lack of policy success, the New Right has kept secularism from becoming the legally established religious self-understanding of America, has kept alive the national debates about abortion and educational choice, and has forced even ardent secularists to recognize the religious roots of much of American life, from Thanksgiving to the civil-rights movement.

Please read and recommend these books. Jesus himself calls the evangelical community to be salt and light in a dark, decaying world. A higher level of teaching on the subject will help us become more responsible.

Thomas K. Johnson
International Institute for Christian Studies
European Humanities University
Minsk, Belarus

The Nature of Confession. Evangelicals and Postliberals in Conversation. Edited by Timothy Phillips and Dennis Okholm. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996, 298 pp., n.p.

This book of essays by theologically diverse scholars interested in possible linkage between evangelicals and postliberals grew out of a 1995 theology conference at Wheaton College.

In their introduction Wheaton professors Phillips and Okholm assure us that contemporary evangelicalism is collapsing. To this demise, they claim, the past generation of traditional orthodoxy has contributed as fully as do the concessions currently being made by evangelicalism to non-Christian culture.

Serious theology, the Wheaton essayists argue, now gets an ampler window in *Christian Century* than in *Christianity Today*. As they see it, postliberals—especially the so-called Yale school—stand at the center of a resurgent "confessional Christianity" whose formative names are G. Lindbeck and the late H. Frei.

Evangelicalism's current predicament the Wheaton mentors trace to a reliance on reason supposedly inspired by the Enlightenment and manifest in its insistence on

common criteria for testing all truth and on evidentialist apologetics. Postliberalism disavows any universally objective standard for vindicating Christianity's truthfulness. It rejects a propositionalist view of revelation wherein doctrinal affirmations refer literally to reality. Lindbeck promotes a cultural-linguistic alternative to both the cognitive-propositional and the experiential-expressive.

A. McGrath offers some telling criticisms. He emphasizes that we cannot verify that all humanity shares a "core experience" of the transcendent, and he protests that a forfeiture of ontological claims reduces doctrine to sociological roots. Yet he rejects cognitive revelation that conveys timelessly objective truth. Is revelatory truth then time-bound? McGrath commends postliberalism for its abandonment of universally shared reason. Doctrinal statements have only "relative adequacy." Postliberalism regards Christian beliefs as fallible and revisable. One ought to seek unity and edification, we are told, more than systematic theology.

The Wheaton commentators promote a link between evangelicalism and postliberalism. Evangelicals should be open, they say, to restudy of the doctrine of God "with the help of postliberal correctives and insights." Both these approaches, we are told, focus "on the christocentric nature and supreme authority of the biblical narrative."

Such claims, however, are then divergently exegeted. Phillips and Okholm applaud G. Hunsinger's insistence that Frei's conceptions of Scripture and of faith-and-history relationships accord with the Reformation emphasis on *sola Scriptura*. By contrast, K. Richardson notes the ambiguity with which postliberals address realistic aspects of the Biblical story, including its references to the Deity. Theology can hardly be authentically Christian, Richardson insists, if it fails to acknowledge the triune God as its ontological presupposition.

J. Wilson probes "a new evangelical paradigm of biblical authority," one that gives priority to faithfulness or performance more than to knowing. As he sees it, the believing community's response has a formative role. This emphasis is not wholly unrelated to views that J. Barr pointedly challenges in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* and that D. Kelsey promotes in *The Uses of Scripture in Recent Theology*.

The InterVarsity volume contains in embellished form essays by Lindbeck, McGrath, Hunsinger and others. The 1995 conference proved abortive as an attempt to achieve evangelical consensus concerning postliberalism. Its achievement was summarized rather as contributing a "research program." Critics of traditional orthodoxy largely dominated the discussion. The published papers, even as edited, pose some critical questions, often lacking pointed answers.

Whereas evangelical philosophy at Wheaton has for a half-generation been largely influenced by A. Holmes, author of *Contours of a Christian Worldview*, Phillips and Okholm encourage exploration of a postliberal alternative. G. Clark of North Park College argues that worldview philosophy as such displaces the person of Jesus and erodes Christian spirituality.

The questions that remain to be persuasively answered by torchbearers for narrative theology and postliberalism remain those raised a decade ago in a remarkable evangelical encounter with H. Frei at Yale. One would think that evangelicals who consider exclusive evangelism a divine mandate would seek unambiguously to answer them. They concern transcendent ontology, objective truth, factual history, and the criteria for verifying them.

Carl F. H. Henry
Watertown, WI

Models for Scripture. By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994, 420 pp., \$19.99 paper.

John Goldingay is an eminent British evangelical OT scholar with a long track record of scholarly production in the areas of exegesis, theology and methodology. The present work is the first of a projected two volumes on the nature and interpretation of Scripture. This volume is concerned primarily with the former, and the forthcoming volume, *Models for Interpretation of Scripture*, will focus on the latter. This book attempts to build a doctrine of Scripture based on the data of Scripture itself—both its claims and its practice—in a more objective fashion than is commonly done among evangelicals (so the author declares), while at the same time giving full weight to Scripture's claims about itself in a way not generally done among critical scholars.

For those accustomed to describing the nature of Scripture as a whole in terms of the interrelated concepts of revelation, inspiration and authority, this will be a challenging book. Goldingay argues that Scripture does not justify use of a single model uniformly in describing its nature. Four models arise from Scripture that each relate more appropriately to one kind of Biblical literature than to others. Historical narrative is best termed "witnessing tradition," although in a secondary sense the model can be applied to Scripture as a whole. The same is true, he says, of "authoritative canon," which applies most directly to behavioral instructions; "inspired word," which applies most naturally to prophecy; and "experienced revelation," which best describes apocalyptic literature. He explains, for example, that "a stretching is required when we apply the model of authority or inspiration or revelation to a narrative text" (p. 15; see also pp. 146, 274–275).

Each of the sections has both helpful and disturbing aspects. Overall, this book is unlikely to satisfy most readers of *JETS* because of its conclusions regarding the divine character of Scripture. This is most clear in the section on inspiration (pp. 199–283). Goldingay correctly notes that the manner and directness of divine involvement in the production of Scripture varied with the different authors and types of literature. "The experience of evangelists and psalmists was unlike that of prophets. Their words are just as much God's words, just as effective and relevant, but they did not come to and through their writers in the same way" (p. 254). Although refusing to speak of degrees of inspiration, he prefers to speak of "degrees or depth or extent of revelation" (p. 222). He argues that the term "word of God" only applies in a primary sense to passages explicitly said to be God's words (e.g. those introduced by "Thus says the LORD"). Isaiah's vineyard song in 5:1–7, for example, is "a song of his own sung for Yahweh" and is "specifically not God's word," but its incorporation in the book of Isaiah "implies a recognition of the whole as a word from Yahweh" (p. 235).

Regarding 2 Tim 3:15–17 Goldingay concludes that *theopneustos* means "breathed out by God" and applies to the entire OT. He also affirms that "the passage presupposes that inspiration is verbal or propositional" (pp. 216–219; see also p. 231). But Goldingay qualifies his view of these verses in at least two ways. First, he argues that the concept of inspiration does not imply "inerrant truthfulness" but is a hermeneutical category upon which Scripture bases its "certain effectiveness and ongoing meaningfulness" (pp. 220–221). Second, he says that "inspired" is a characteristic that may be ascribed to writings outside the Bible.

Regarding the first qualification, Goldingay declares that "words uttered by Isaiah belong both to him and to God" just as "words uttered by Hamlet belong both to him and to Shakespeare" (p. 249). He nevertheless asserts that "to affirm that scripture came into being through acts of God's providence does not suggest grounds for affirming the flawlessness of scripture" (p. 251). He defines inspiration as that which "involves God working on, with, and through human beings in such a way that they

utter human words that have the effectiveness and meaningfulness that attaches to words that God utters" (p. 237). However, the truthfulness of Scripture is never the point whenever Scripture declares its divine character (p. 275). God's word is true "not in the sense of factual correctness . . . but in the sense of its reliability and effectiveness" (p. 212). And it is "reliable in the sense that it is guaranteed to come true—guaranteed by the very truthfulness of God—not in the sense that it is necessarily true at the moment" (p. 213). Effectiveness (which he relates to infallibility) means that God's word "effectively shapes history" (p. 210) and "brings people to death or to new life" (p. 222), and that prophecies and promises are "certain to come about" (pp. 209, 212). He later qualifies even this affirmation, however, by explaining that Biblical prophecy regarding the future conveys only "what the events to come will *mean*" and provides not "a forecast of how things must literally be" but a "possible" and "imaginary scenario" of "the kind of issue that must come from present events" (pp. 296–297).

"Ongoing meaningfulness" refers to the significance Scripture has beyond its original context (2 Tim 3:16; Rom 15:4). We can declare any portion of Scripture to be the Lord's word, he says, "because such passages *are* designed to do something to the life of the people of God and because there *is* something profound and relevant to us about the way they portray a world before our eyes and ears." And this is true even of parts "that may not seem effective or relevant at all" (p. 253). Sometimes, however, Scripture continues to speak "in regrettable ways, as happened when biblical material affirming slavery delayed the abolition of slavery" (p. 257). Also, historical inquiry, which can serve as a source of revelation parallel to that of Scripture, "may suggest theological insights that reflect only in part the awareness of the [biblical] witnesses themselves, *or even subvert them*" (p. 47; italics mine). Elsewhere he claims that the gnostic writings' "affirmation of women's roles and of God as mother may preserve or develop authentic Christian insight" and that they "may well include sayings that represent what Jesus actually said, whereas there are sayings in the canonical Gospels of which that is not true" (p. 176). Particularly in view of such statements can we agree that "certain effectiveness" and "ongoing relevance" is an adequate inference from "breathed out by God"? Can there be an errant breath of God?

Even more serious, perhaps, is Goldingay's second qualification that writings outside the Bible may also be "inspired." He locates the uniqueness and authority of Scripture not in its divine character or origins but "in the fact that there alone can we discover that word of God that consists in the gospel message. If we lacked scripture, that gospel would be concealed and lost" (p. 28). But how did Scripture come to have this uniqueness of content if not because of its divine character? Goldingay seems only to give an historical answer to this question. He explains that "the canonical documents are ones in which the church found the best evidence for the nature of its faith as formulated during its classical period" (p. 114). Although he stresses the normativeness of the biblical writings (pp. 127–130), he refuses to explain this significance in terms of a work of the Spirit that was unique to the biblical period. "The belief that there was a unique charism of inspiration confined to prophets of the biblical period looks like a hangover from the dispensationalist view, which confined charisms to the first century" (p. 243; see also p. 175). Elsewhere Goldingay declares that "when God speaks a prophetic word through someone today, the process is similar to that which obtained in the case of a scriptural prophet" (pp. 78–79). It was John Calvin, he says, who made inspiration the basis for Scripture's unique authority in the Church over against post-Biblical tradition, Church teaching, and Montanism, and that "his successors went further in declaring that scripture alone was inspired" (p. 258; see also p. 179). Linking inspiration and authority in this way "led to an obscuring of the significance scrip-

ture itself attaches to inspiration" (p. 258; the same charge is made against Warfield on p. 268 for linking inspiration and inerrancy).

Furthermore, "the Bible itself does not seem to see the Spirit's involvement with its authors as phenomenologically distinctive" (p. 258). Although "the involvement of the Spirit" results in something "extraordinary and far-reaching," it is "apparently not in itself a guarantee of the exalted theological or moral significance of what it generates" (p. 243). "There are other inspired statements as well as those in scripture, and the mere fact of being inspired does not convey this distinctive authority" (p. 258; see also p. 116). Scripture's authority over against other possible sources of truth derives rather from its "link with the gospel events" (p. 259).

Perhaps a clue to the variance between Goldingay's view of the nature of inspiration and that of conservative orthodoxy is the alarming statement that "phenomena such as teaching, prophecy, tongues, and healing in the church are distinguished from the same phenomena in other religions or in secular contexts not by their intrinsic nature or psychology but by the purpose they are consecrated to serve. Scriptural inspiration may thus be seen as a subset of general creative inspiration" (p. 244). He also states that "the prayer and testimony of people who belong to other religions may also seem to bring illumination to people who confess Christ, as may the traditions and teachings of the culture in which we are brought up" (p. 189). Perhaps this is the sense in which Goldingay suggests: "The very fact that the Psalms are poetry, like the words of the prophets, may be evidence that they come through divine inspiration" (p. 260). He concludes that "there is certainly a uniqueness about inspired scripture that needs safeguarding, but there are no grounds for locating the basis of this uniqueness in the manner of its inspiration" (p. 245).

The primary area of Scripture where Goldingay's understanding of inspiration will be troublesome to conservatives is historical narrative, which he declares to be an "adequate" and "fundamentally historical" but not factually inerrant witness to events. Being dependent upon their sources, Biblical historians sometimes erred in their details and sometimes expanded their received traditions out of their imaginations, sometimes creating events that never occurred. The Biblical historical testimony is like that of witnesses in court who can make mistakes and contradict each other over certain matters without being dismissed as unreliable. "We have no theological grounds for believing that scripture's witnessing tradition is wholly free from error" (pp. 45–46). Scripture never infers factual accuracy from inspiration, he says, nor is it a necessary deduction except in cases where God dictated his words (pp. 273–275; see pp. 227–231 on dictation). Furthermore, he says, Scripture does contain errors. God did not choose to inform the Biblical historians of the facts in order to insure the accuracy of their accounts (see p. 40). He rather in gracious condescension "spoke through the kind of historiography that they would write. It is *that* which is the inspired word of God. . . . Errors in scriptural narrative are not present because of God's oversight [i.e. carelessness?]; God knew they were there but was prepared to work through them. This may be a peculiar, even objectionable, way for God to act; to judge from the actual evidence of scripture, it is the way God has acted" (p. 281).

The two cases of errors he offers on pp. 268–269 (1 Samuel 17 compared with 2 Sam 21:19 regarding who killed Goliath, and Matthew's citation of "Jeremiah" in 27:9–10) have been given reasonable explanations (e.g. by R. F. Youngblood and D. F. Payne on Samuel; and R. T. France, D. A. Carson and C. L. Blomberg on Matthew), so that Goldingay's position is clearly more presuppositional than he admits. His charge against Warfield that "no amount of evidence can turn an 'apparent difficulty' into a 'proven error'" can be turned around. For some, no explanation of a difficulty in the Bible is reasonable enough to resolve a "clear case of error."

Goldingay believes that the Biblical historians were also skillful storytellers, who used their imaginations and experience in the service of truth (see pp. 71–73). “We need not assume that every story involving a floating axhead is to be taken as witnessing to a literal historical event” (p. 36). Although the Biblical narratives are the word of God “by extension,” it is their witness to “God’s promise and purpose at work in history” that is more directly so described (p. 255). And the truth about the past and the present could sometimes be more effectively conveyed by fiction than by fact. He compares Biblical history to the film *Chariots of Fire*, in which a race is depicted that never occurred. “There was no such race. But it is a reliable, though legendary, portrayal of the significance of the man [Harold Abrahams]. As fact can be used to convey untruth, fiction can be the best way to represent historical truth about the past” (p. 67). Goldingay has apparently changed his mind since he wrote in *TynBul* in 1972: “If God was really active in the production of this tradition, then surely the events it describes must have happened.” On pp. 37, 41 Goldingay mentions six criteria that can be used to judge the literal or historical nature of an account, particularly of an extraordinary event: (1) its “place in the context of the wider story of God’s action,” (2) its “significance for our lives,” (3) the extent and credibility of the evidence, (4) the literary genre of the account, (5) consistency with other statements in the same source, and (6) external evidence. Apparently by some or all of these criteria he judges as non-literal or unhistorical such accounts as Genesis 1–2, Joshua 6, 2 Kings 4, 6 (see pp. 40–41). What really happened at Joshua’s Jericho, for example, is uncertain because many centuries separate the event from the Biblical account (see pp. 104, 139), the account takes “a nonhistoriographic form” and it is “difficult to correlate with other Middle Eastern source material for the period” (p. 43; see also p. 75).

It is by no means a settled matter, however, that these accounts, especially those in Joshua and Kings, satisfy all or even any of Goldingay’s criteria. (1) How do creation, the miraculous fall of Jericho and Elisha’s miracles not fit “the context of the wider story of God’s action”? (2) What is the logical relationship between significance and factuality and how would such a test be objectively applied? (3) How much and how credible does the evidence have to be? If “Jesus . . . gives us grounds for trusting the documents in the First Testament” (p. 44), what further substantiation could we want? (4) Particularly in Joshua and Kings there are no more clearly “historiographic forms” in the OT. By what evidence other than the extraordinary nature of the events recounted can these forms be judged as legendary and thus “nonhistoriographic”? Regarding the floating axhead, A. R. Millard has written: “If their record reads like a legend today, that may be due in part to the brevity of the account and in part to the conditioning of the modern reader. Neither is sufficient ground for demoting it from ‘history’ to ‘legend’ without more ado. . . . [T]here is nothing in it itself to mark it as a composition of different nature from the accounts of David’s wars or Merodach-Baladan’s embassy to Hezekiah” (*Faith, Tradition, and History*, pp. 43–44). (5) The only one of these accounts that is arguably inconsistent is Genesis 1–2, and the consistency and unity of these “two story accounts of creation” (p. 70) has been reasonably and adequately demonstrated (see especially the commentaries by Mathews and Sailhamer). (6) Finally, whereas archeology cannot confirm the Israelite conquest of Jericho, neither can it refute it (see Yamauchi in *Faith, Tradition, and History*, pp. 14–17, and V. P. Long in *The Art of Biblical History*, pp. 142–149). Goldingay objects to inerrantists who “take the text as a description of literal history except when you are compelled to do otherwise and where the traditional view simply cannot be maintained” (pp. 51–52). He argues for “a more principled principle,” but he has not offered us a satisfactory one.

While no one argues that ancient and modern historians have the same interest in chronology, background information, personal appearance and character develop-

ment, or that their methods are the same for portraying the attitudes of their characters, it does not follow that their interest in factuality necessarily differs (as he concludes on pp. 67–68). It is generally quite easy to tell when we are reading parables, where truthfulness and factuality are not necessarily intertwined. But it has not been demonstrated that the historians of ancient Israel and the Church saw no problem with seeking to “generate . . . life commitments” (p. 74) by recounting fictional events of the past as if they actually occurred. Goldingay tries to distinguish between giving imaginative expression to the way God deals with people and merely imagining how God deals with them (p. 72). But there may not in fact be much practical difference. If a Biblical writer has made a life commitment to the God of the OT or to Jesus as Savior and Lord, is not his faith likely based on what he believes to have actually occurred? And if he is seeking to lead others to this commitment will he likely feel the need to embellish or supplement what has for him been sufficient? If God is deserving of faith, obedience, and worship, is he not so deserving for what he has actually done? Must we add to his acts and words to make them more compelling? Furthermore, would not even an ancient writer consider it somewhat unethical to manipulate his audience toward a life commitment by recounting events that he knew did not really happen?

While there are many commendable affirmations in this book of the divine character of Scripture, they die the death of Goldingay’s two qualifications. He has diluted his definition of “inspiration” and “Word of God” until it can apply to almost anything and is therefore virtually meaningless. Although Goldingay affirms the uniqueness of Scripture, he fails to make a sufficient case for it. J. I. Packer wrote (*Fundamentalism and the Word of God*, p. 44): “The Christian’s most pressing need in every age is to have a reliable principle by which he may test the conflicting voices that claim to speak for Christianity and so make out amid their discordant clamor what he ought to believe and do.” Goldingay quotes Packer, however, then responds by quoting R. P. C. Hanson: “The natural human desire for an infallible authority is no argument at all that God has seen fit to provide one” (p. 120). Hanson’s point regarding a questionable “natural human desire for an infallible authority” does not speak to the issue. Packer’s focus is not human desire, which God is certainly not bound to satisfy, but human need, which God has promised to meet. Goldingay appears to have retreated before the onslaughts of rationalism to an indefensible position. *Models for Scripture* is not a book to be embraced (despite the illustrious scholars who furnished endorsements for the cover), but neither can it be dismissed. The issues raised and the level of scholarship make it unavoidable. Significant points are made, some of which deserve repetition, but many of which deserve refutation.

E. Ray Clendenen

Broadman & Holman Publishers, Nashville, TN

The Bible in Modern Culture: Theology and Historical-Critical Method from Spinoza to Käsemann. By Roy A. Harrisville and Walter Sundberg. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995, xi + 282 pp., \$20.00 paper.

In some ways Daniel Patte of Vanderbilt scooped the authors of this book, Harrisville and Sundberg (hereafter HS) of Luther-Northwestern Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Patte’s *Ethics of Biblical Interpretation* (which appeared earlier in 1995 than HS’s study) argued that historical-critical readings of the Bible, far from generating assured results based on unassailable premises, are “normal” readings, too. That

is, they presuppose a worldview that is not itself a result of critical Biblical exegesis but rather the foundation for it. Patte called classic historical-critical method in question by showing that it is not just method applied but a theology confessed. HS are making a similar point.

But whereas Patte argued his case synchronically, against the backdrop of the multiplicity of hermeneutical strategies presently in vogue, HS adopt a diachronic approach. They go back to "the emergence of rationalist biblical criticism" in Spinoza (1632–1677), then proceed to devote chapters to Reimarus, Schleiermacher, Strauss, F. C. Baur, von Hofmann, Troeltsch, Machen, Bultmann and Käsemann. These core chapters are preceded by an opening chapter called "The War of the Worldviews" and rounded off by the concluding chapter, "Two Traditions of Historical Criticism."

The thesis that HS wish to advance is that historical criticism is wrong to believe that "it is able to go beyond the reach of cultural presuppositions and philosophical commitments to establish the historical meaning of biblical texts once and for all." In fact, "no method of biblical interpretation can transcend its cultural milieu" (p. 263). HS use history to expose the historical critics.

While the bad guys in this book are the historical critics, the good ones are, first, HS, who blow the whistle on them, and then von Hofmann, Machen, Bultmann and Käsemann, all of whom uphold an "Augustinian" approach to historical-theological matters.

Historical-critical readers will marvel at HS's kind words for von Hofmann and Machen, especially the latter, who is praised effusively for his trenchantly argued claim that "the Enlightenment tradition of criticism is nothing less than another religion that supplants biblical truth" (p. 268). He is credited with registering the same protests against liberalism for which Barth and H. Richard Niebuhr usually garner all the plaudits (p. 200). HS thus break ranks with a regnant NT scholarship in North America that follows James Barr in demonizing fundamentalists and evangelicals ("In the vast majority of mainline seminaries and divinity schools, the fundamentalist [e.g. Machen] is the object of hostile suspicion and the butt of jokes"; HS, pp. 198–199) while turning an indulgent blind eye towards its own theological bankruptcy and sometimes plain zaniness.

Others are apt to be surprised that Bultmann and Käsemann are given so much credit for upholding the "Augustinian" strand of Biblical interpretation. By this HS refer to "the dominant religious tradition of Western Christendom" (p. 271). Augustinianism as HS define it affirms human depravity, repudiates Pelagianism, upholds election and predestination, and trusts "in the authority of the church over individual faith" (p. 28). HS fail to convince me that either Bultmann or Käsemann deserve much credit for upholding these venerable truths in anything like the sense that von Hofmann and Machen did. Von Hofmann reacted directly and emphatically to F. C. Baur, on both historical and theological grounds, while Bultmann and Käsemann operate completely within the *Fragestellungen* (approach to asking questions) that Baur bequeathed to NT research in the German university.

Instead of rationalist historical criticism, HS argue, Biblical scholarship needs to return to Augustinian historical criticism. Why? Because "this . . . tradition of historical criticism [as modeled in von Hofmann, Machen, Bultmann and Käsemann] teaches . . . that, in principle, the rigorous, scientific examination of the Bible can neither destroy nor support faith" (p. 272). This sounds very much like a restatement of Kant's creation of a safe haven for faith via denial of empirical knowledge's relevance for faith. It is immensely interesting to see how HS press von Hofmann (an avowed if critical historical realist) and Machen (torchbearer of Old Princeton) into service of this view, which both men explicitly repudiated.

For example, von Hofmann apparently coined the term *Heilsgeschichte*; no one familiar with German theology since Lessing and Kant can fail to appreciate what a non-Kantian juxtaposition of the noumenal (*Heil*) and the phenomenal (*Geschichte*) this neologism comprises. HS manage this feat by tracing a certain indifference-bordering-on-hostility toward equating written Scripture and preached gospel back to Luther, then projecting that same Scripture-gospel dichotomy into subsequent centuries up through Käsemann, pulling von Hofmann and Machen into the slipstream. This projection is highly strained with respect to von Hofmann, and it utterly collapses when applied to Machen. The tired assumption on which HS's argument rests (that Bultmann, and post-Bultmannian "Augustinian" Protestants like Käsemann and HS, are more loyal to Luther than Bible-believing folk who unambiguously rejected Bultmann's gospel of an unresurrected rabbinic wannabe in favor of a hypothetical figure of full confessional proportions) cannot be examined here.

Still, HS's critique of historical criticism is a welcome addition to the growing literature making the same point from different angles. It must be conceded that they say little that is not at least intimated by numerous other scholars (Cullmann, Thielicke, Dahl and Goppelt immediately come to mind) who were skeptical of Enlightenment-blinded Biblical scholarship and never threw "Augustinianism" overboard to begin with. But these theologians (like Machen's classic *Christianity and Liberalism*) are rarely consulted in mainline centers of theological education. Perhaps their ideas will be heard if marketed in a new book by mainline Lutheran authors with personal ties to Käsemann. Since von Hofmann and Machen together get only 16% of the total pages, it is not as if readers from circles traditionally addicted to historical criticism need feel that they are being weaned away from their Troeltsch cold turkey.

Robert W. Yarbrough
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Beyond the Obvious: Discover the Deeper Meaning of Scripture. By James DeYoung and Sarah Hurty. Gresham: Vision House, 1995, 422 pp., \$15.99.

This book is primarily a discussion of hermeneutics, departing from the mainstream how-to interpretation books not only in content but also in its desire to relate hermeneutics to spirituality. The book begins with the assertion that we must practice the hermeneutic used by the NT authors. DeYoung and Hurty believe the NT authors do not always locate meaning in the single intent of the human authors of the OT. They therefore propose a "deeper meaning" that exists beyond the literal meaning of the words. A survey of hermeneutical method from the first century to the present with special attention to the question of deeper meaning is provided.

DeYoung and Hurty continue by discussing the possibility of a center by which to interpret the Bible and conclude that the center of Scripture is the kingdom of God. Using a model of inaugurated eschatology, they define God's kingdom as rule (transcendent) and relationship (immanent). Not only do they see kingdom as the Biblical center but also as a paradigm for reality and interpretation.

In chap. 5, DeYoung and Hurty distinguish "existential reality" (all that we empirically perceive and experience, including socio-cultural structures) from "essential reality" (including God and that which he has created to be eternal). These roughly correspond to the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of God (pp. 102–103).

In accordance with their model of inaugurated eschatology, they see existential reality as transitory; it is being displaced as essential reality is actualized in it. The implication of this is that “the Bible’s exhortations to submit within social institutions are not based upon essential reality (what is true for all time) but upon existential reality (the standards for those institutions in that historical moment)” (p. 105). Yet we are to give up our freedom as kingdom citizens and submit to the social order of existential reality for the sake of the gospel.

This kingdom center is the hermeneutical paradigm by which DeYoung and Hurty find their proposed deeper meaning, which is “meaning for us” (p. 109). They see an existential meaning, which is the meaning seen by the original human author; this is found by the grammatical-historical method. Yet there is also the essential meaning intended by God, “the meaning which is *tied* to the existential reality, but which *transcends* these details [i.e. “historical persons and events”] in such a way that if the details change, the essential meaning remains unchanged. . . . This essential meaning is the single sense of the biblical text. The existential reality referred to in the text is the historical *particularization* of that single sense” (pp. 110–111).

While the original historical meaning is important and necessary, one must press beyond to find the deeper meaning by reading Scripture against the grid of the kingdom paradigm (pp. 110, 113, 300). “It is the essential meaning of a passage that helps us to apply Scripture to our own lives. This is the meaning that transcends time and culture” (p. 113).

DeYoung and Hurty continue by discussing the Spirit’s role in interpretation. They cite John 14–17 and 1 John 2:27 to support their claim that the Spirit speaks to us directly, and not just mediately through Scripture. While they believe that the canon is closed, they see the Spirit giving new truth and revelation to those who listen for his voice.

The book also contains a short discussion of revelation and history. While DeYoung and Hurty do not believe in a special *Heilsgeschichte* apart from “normal” history, they do believe that all of history is revelatory. Since they acknowledge that “the meaning of historical events is not inherent in the event itself,” they propose that the kingdom paradigm in Scripture should be used as the key to interpret history (pp. 215, 218). In the final chapter, they summarize the book and offer observations on contextualization and doing theology.

There are six appendixes, dealing with the following subjects: postmodernism and a postmodern evangelical hermeneutic; reproducing the Biblical hermeneutic; the kingdom of God as Biblical center; application of the kingdom paradigm; the nature of revelation; and the relation of deeper meaning to the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy statement. Both the appendixes and the copious endnotes (pp. 311–422) must be read for an accurate understanding of the book.

While the emphasis on spirituality and community is commendable, this book is crippled by flawed reasoning, a lack of rigorous thinking, and numerous unjustified assumptions. DeYoung and Hurty repeatedly assert that the NT writers did not interpret the OT literally or understand its meaning as the single authorial intent of the words (e.g. pp. 19, 24, 33–48, 51), and they believe that Jesus changed the words to suit his purposes (pp. 40–41, 316). The notion that this might be a textual problem does not even occur to them; rather, their entire discussion is based on the assumption that the NT writers were reading an OT that was identical to the Hebrew text reflected in our English Bibles. They mention that there might be a different way to understand some of the passages (p. 33) but fail to give any alternate views adequate consideration—a serious shortcoming in an entry-level book on interpretation. The problem of the differences between our Old and New Testaments is something

that will not be solved without exegesis and textual criticism, and DeYoung and Hurty fail to provide either. Their discussion does not show that the NT writers saw a deeper meaning—it merely begs the question of which OT text was being used by the NT writers.

DeYoung and Hurty laud “modern discoveries in the field of semantics” (p. 80) and are aware of the classical semantic distinctions of sense, reference and significance (pp. 32, 68, 324). Yet they are quite willing to dispense with these distinctions (pp. 61, 68, 362), especially when they define “existential meaning” as sense, reference and significance (p. 110), or “deeper meaning” as “meaning for me” (p. 109). While their honesty is refreshing when they admit that “understanding the intricacies of meaning is outside of our training” (p. 139), one wonders why they are writing a book on hermeneutics and interpretation if this is true.

DeYoung and Hurty speak of “the deeper meaning placed there [in Scripture] by God” (pp. 110–111, 362). But if meaning is verbal and texts can assert only what their words say, it is obviously problematic to speak of “deeper” meaning. Yet DeYoung and Hurty wish to speak of this deeper meaning as being attached to the text in some sense, even if it is not found in the literal sense of the words. They accomplish this by identifying the deeper meaning with the theme of kingdom that they abstract from the text as a whole. But even if this kind of hermeneutical freedom ever existed for the NT authors, it is doubtful whether this “deeper meaning” can be spoken of as “meaning” at all. In what sense is an abstraction “meaning”? Once one strips away the historical particulars from a textual assertion (pp. 110–111), what is left? And how is this dehistoricized sense any “deeper”? To employ such a hermeneutic is to treat meaning as ideal reference, to use a kind of *Sachkritik* where we abstract the concept of “kingdom” from the entire Bible and use it to departicularize any single OT statement in order to find timeless truth.

DeYoung and Hurty assert that it was legitimate for the apostles to find a deeper meaning from the historically particularized OT by reading it with a kingdom paradigm. Yet it is obvious that the apostles have “re-historicized” this essential meaning when they speak of Christ as the historical fulfillment of prophecy. Once one admits that there are two textual assertions with different historical particulars, one has created a contradiction between two texts that cannot be resolved, even by relating them to a common abstract idea of “kingdom.”

DeYoung and Hurty relate their inaugurated eschatology to ethics in an innovative and fresh way. There is a great need for further discussion of this topic and its implications. For example, if the kingdom is gradually advancing, what implications does this actualization have for our behavior? Are we to gradually start acting on our freedom as citizens of the kingdom as society changes around us? At what point would we do so?

Their view of the Spirit’s communication, while probably a departure from the majority opinion, does not really contribute any new material to the discussion. The fundamental question remains: What does it mean to “hear the voice of the Spirit”? How does he communicate to us directly? By what means do we apprehend and validate such communication? The book offers no suggestions.

DeYoung and Hurty’s view of history as revelation (which is remarkably similar to that of William Temple) is problematic as well. First, they fail to realize that we do not have access to past events as events—the only access we have to such events is through a text. It is therefore difficult to see how past events can be in any way revelatory to us. Second, their method of interpreting events (see particularly their vignette, pp. 205–206) seems to yield results so broad that they can hardly be considered new revelatory material.

The claims made by DeYoung and Hurty in this volume will require a much more vigorous defense before they are accepted by the scholarly evangelical community. It is to be hoped that this book will increase our awareness of the hermeneutical issues at stake and stimulate careful discussion.

Michael A. Lyons
Madison, WI