

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Reconstructing Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Method Applied to the Reconstruction of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>.* By Edward D. Herbert. Leiden: Brill, 1997, xv + 293 pp., \$191.50.

This is a revised version of Herbert's Cambridge doctoral thesis written under the supervision of Graham Davies. Herbert examined thoroughly the fragments of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>, one of the most significant Biblical scrolls. According to Herbert, "a twelfth of Samuel is now extant and identified, spanning just over a third of the verses and 45 of the 54 chapters" (p. 1).

After a short introduction, the book deals with "A New Method for Reconstructing the Text of Biblical Scrolls," "Establishing Elements of the Method," "Laying the Foundations for the Reconstruction of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>," and the "Reconstruction and Analysis of 2 Samuel." After the conclusion, useful appendixes follow: "New Fragment Identifications," "4QSam<sup>a</sup> Fragment Index," "Orthography," "Deviations," and "Fragment Juxtapositions." The book ends with a select bibliography and indexes of authors, Dead Sea Scrolls, and Scripture passages. It uses the official photographs on pp. 249–274. This makes it very useful, though expensive.

Since no clear method had been developed for reconstructing the text of scrolls, "scholars had rather depended largely upon common sense and general scholarly judgment" (p. 2). Herbert proposes measuring the average column width and then average letter widths for 4QSam<sup>a</sup> (Table 40). An interesting result emerges from this analysis: *šin* is on average the widest letter at 3.47 mm, followed by *qop*, *tet*, and *samek*, while the final *nun* is the narrowest at 0.99 mm, followed by *zayin*, *waw* and *nun*. It is noteworthy that *waw* is not the narrowest and *yod* is only the fifth narrowest. Herbert measured every letter in the scroll to come to his conclusions.

The usefulness of this study is clear when one examines the most recent article, by F. M. Cross and D. W. Parry, "A Preliminary Edition of a Fragment of 4QSam<sup>b</sup> (4Q52)," *BASOR* 306 (1997) 63–74, which still follows the old method, though it refers to Herbert's dissertation (1995) as one of the "alternate modes of calculating line and lacunas lengths."

For example, Cross and Parry posit a "graphic similarity" (p. 67) between *השלחן* (4QSam<sup>b</sup>) and *הַלֶּחֶם* "the meal" in 1 Sam 20:27 since they think that "*mem* and *nun* are easily confused" in the old Hebrew script. While these two scripts are similar in the older linear alphabet, the letter *psi*, which is the widest letter in the Qumran scrolls, hardly would be missed by the eyes of scribes.

Herbert's method is more objective than Cross and Parry's. While there is no way for a reader to check the latter's *ad hoc* remarks such as "spacing requires," "the reconstruction required by the limited space," "there is no room," and "this line is long," Herbert's method is empirical and open to the reader's scrutiny.

This is a highly technical work with painstaking research behind it; it is sometimes not easy to understand, and not very reader-friendly. For example, on p. 11, the last paragraph, such references as "section e" and "lines (4–7) of Fig. 1" suddenly appear, though fig. 1 on p. 12 has line numbers only from 21 to 37. Also, some technical statistical terms used are not familiar to Biblical scholars.

However, the purpose of this book is clear enough: to establish a scientific method to reconstruct the Biblical text of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Now that scholars have easier access to the scrolls through the microfiche edition, every serious student of the Hebrew text of Samuel will reap great benefit from Herbert's original contributions. His work surely sets a standard for a scientific and objective study and reconstruction of the Samuel and other scrolls.

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*Joshua*. By David M. Howard, Jr. New American Commentary 5. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998, 464 pp., \$29.99.

In this careful, thorough, and lucid exposition of the book of Joshua, David Howard, Professor of OT at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, has made a solid contribution to the study of this important book. The commentary clearly reflects the intent of the New American Commentary series to focus on theological and exegetical concerns of the Biblical text, along with discussion of issues raised in contemporary Biblical scholarship, and to do so from the starting assumption of the inerrancy of Scripture.

The arrangement of the commentary includes an introduction and four sections of commentary: I. Preparations for Inheriting the Land (1:1–5:15); II. Inheriting the Land (6:1–12:24); III. Apportioning the Land (13:1–21:45); and IV. Farewells (22:1–24:33). Each of these sections is concluded with some "Theological Reflections" that elucidate and expound the theological implications and overtones of the preceding historical narratives in useful and suggestive ways. Scattered throughout the book are nine excurses that deal with interpretive issues (often of a controversial nature, but important for understanding the book of Joshua) in a more detailed fashion than could properly be done in a running commentary format. These include: (1) The Giving of the Land in Joshua; (2) Rahab's Lie; (3) The Identity of the Angel of the Lord; (4) The Archaeology of Jericho and Ai; (5) Destruction and Devoted Things in Joshua; (6) Identifying Geographical Entities; (7) Israel's Inheritance of the Land in Joshua; (8) Patterns in the Land Distribution Lists; (9) Etiology in Joshua. The analysis and documentation provided on each of these topics give the reader both competent guidance in interpretation and identification of significant resources for further study.

In his introduction, Howard engages foundational matters, most of which are also topics of long-standing debate, and here, as well, the reader will find well-documented and carefully reasoned discussions. Howard opts for a modified conquest model over the settlement, revolt or evolutionary models for the taking of the land of Canaan. He favors an early date for the exodus (mid-fifteenth century BC), and rejects the Nothian "Deuteronomistic History" hypothesis for dating the book. Howard's own conclusion on authorship is that portions of the book were written in Joshua's day, and that it was "substantially complete by the time of David at the latest" (p. 30). Howard also gives a good overview of the "maximalist-minimalist" controversy concerning the reliability of the historical narratives of the OT. He concludes that minimalist approaches suffer in that they are not only "profoundly antibiblical in most respects, but they also founder methodologically in the ways in which they use and interpret the evidence, both biblical and extrabiblical" (p. 45).

The real strength of Howard's commentary, however, lies in its detailed exposition of the meaning of the original Hebrew text. In his expositions, Howard regularly incorporates competent and instructive discussions of, among other things, the following: (1) Hebrew word meanings, usage, and morphology (e.g. use of *raq*, p. 95, nn. 92,

93; use of  $\text{ʔāz}$ , p. 238, nn. 191, 192; paragogic *nun*, p. 124, n. 192); (2) notes on syntax and discourse structure that highlight linguistic connections often obscured or lost in English translation (e.g. function of *hinnēh*, p. 156, n. 284; disjunctive, circumstantial clause construction, to show that 7:11–13 is a flashback, expanding 7:3–9, p. 200; comments on verb forms, p. 225, n. 163); (3) occasional objections to NIV renderings of the original Hebrew, which often reflect a very different understanding of the text (e.g. p. 200, n. 104; p. 237, n. 187; p. 240 on 10:12; p. 409 on 22:18; and (4) rejection of hypothetical reconstructions of the growth of the present text by means of identifying supposed sources and redactional layers (e.g. p. 118, n. 173 on chaps. 3 and 4; p. 167 on chap. 6; historicity of the boundary lists, p. 295, n. 4). This commentary is the most thorough, up-to-date exposition of the original text of Joshua from an evangelical scholar that is currently available. It nicely complements the volume by R. Hess in the Tyndale OT Commentary series by providing a more detailed verse-by-verse exposition of the text than is found in Hess.

Howard's willingness to draw conclusions on difficult and controversial issues is an evident characteristic of this commentary and is certainly to be commended. The reader is not left with a host of options on difficult matters to sort out for himself, as is sometimes the case with commentaries. When difficult interpretive questions arise, Howard characteristically defines the problem, examines arguments for a variety of possible interpretations and then gives a well-reasoned justification for his own conclusion. This, of course, means that readers (and reviewers) may not always agree with Howard's outcomes, but such is to be expected in any commentary that deals with such a large amount of material in which there are many difficult interpretive questions.

A few of Howard's conclusions with which some evangelical interpreters may take issue include (1) his assessment of Rahab's lie to the messengers of the king of Jericho (Joshua 2); (2) his interpretation of the "sun standing still" on the day of the battle of Gibeon (Joshua 10); and (3) his explanation of the reason for the crisis that arose over the building of an altar on the east side of the Jordan by the Transjordan tribes (Joshua 22).

It is Howard's view that Rahab "should not have lied, but she should have trusted God to provide for her a way to protect the spies that did not necessitate sinning" (p. 108). But the question is: Were Rahab's deceptive words sinful? While this incident raises complex ethical issues on which there is a long history of disagreement, it seems to me that Howard's conclusion does not give sufficient weight to the spirit of the ninth commandment ("you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"), which in its positive thrust requires that our words serve the cause of justice for our neighbor. Charles Hodge (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3, pp. 440–443) has argued that there are circumstances in which a person is not bound to speak the truth, and in such situations deception is not morally a falsehood, nor are such words, by definition, to be considered a lie. On the basis of this reasoning it would have been Rahab's obligation to protect the spies by deceiving the agents of Jericho's king. 1 Samuel 16:2 (a text that Howard does not discuss) in which the LORD tells Samuel to deceive Saul if he is asked why he is going to Bethlehem, would seem to support Hodge's view. Certainly, as Howard would agree, there are no simple answers to this question with its far-reaching ethical implications, but it appears that Howard rejects the above line of argument (which he terms "hierarchicalism" or "graded absolutism") primarily because it introduces "an element of human subjectivity at a critical point in making ethical decisions" (p. 109). Perhaps it does, but is that not an inherent part of human responsibility as creatures who are endowed with the *Imago Dei* and who live in a fallen world?

Howard surveys five different views of the miracle of the battle of Gibeon in Joshua 10—(1) the earth stopped rotating; (2) the sun's light lingered; (3) the sun's light was

blocked; (4) a special sign was involved; (5) the passage is figurative—and concludes that the proposal “with the least problems would seem to be that the words directed to the sun and moon were figurative, describing the battle in poetic terms but making no comment at all about any extraordinary positioning or movement of the sun and the moon” (p. 247). While the figurative or poetic view can certainly be supported by similar language in Hab 3:11, as Howard suggests, it suffers, in my opinion, from not adequately taking into account the sun’s position over Gibeon and the moon’s over Aijalon, which implies a time in the early morning and the prolongation of darkness rather than light. Howard appears to reject this view primarily because it does “not adequately account for the . . . verb *‘md*, ‘to stand,’ which describes the moon’s action in v. 13a and which is used of the sun itself in v. 13b” (p. 247). Yet it could be argued that in 2 Kgs 4:6 and Jon 1:15 *‘md* is used in the sense of “cease” and therefore could have a similar sense in Josh 10:13.

A third matter on which some interpreters may take issue with Howard concerns the question of why the Israelites who settled west of the Jordan became so upset over the building of an altar near the Jordan by the Transjordan tribes when they returned to their territory east of the Jordan (Joshua 22). The explanation normally given, and the one advanced by Howard, is that this act was a violation of “the law against offering a burnt offering or sacrifice at any location other than the tabernacle (Lev 17:8–9) . . . ” (p. 406). This, of course, raises the complex question of whether it was ever legitimate for Israelites to offer sacrifices at local sanctuaries, provided these met the qualifications of Exod 20:22–26, or whether sacrifice was always to be restricted to the sole central sanctuary initially located at the tabernacle and then later at the temple. With respect to Lev 17:8–9, many interpreters understand its requirement to be intended for the wilderness period rather than the entire OT period. It would seem to me that the issue in Joshua 22 is not the issue of the legitimacy of local altars. If Joshua 22 presupposes a ban on all altars but the central altar, then it might be asked how one is to explain the altar built on Mount Ebal in Josh 8:30–35. It would seem that the issue in Joshua 22 is that the Israelites west of the Jordan feared that the Transjordanians intended to use their altar as a rival to the central sanctuary at the tabernacle. Since it is clear that there could be only one central altar, and since this was not their intent, the issue was settled. While on the surface this may seem to be a rather innocuous issue, it quickly spills over into the Wellhausenian centralization of worship theory and carries many important implications.

These matters notwithstanding, Howard has made an important new contribution to Joshua literature which should be consulted by anyone engaged in serious study of this important OT book.

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*Hear, My Son. Teaching & Learning in Proverbs 1–9.* By Daniel J. Estes. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 174 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Estes, associate professor of Bible at Cedarville College, “endeavours to synthesize the unorganized data from a portion of the book of Proverbs into a more systematic statement of the pedagogical theory that underlies its teachings” (p. 13) and is thus “embedded in the text” (p. 14). In his analysis, Estes approaches education as “personal formation” (p. 14)—the primary purpose of the book of Proverbs. He organizes his analysis around “seven categories typical of pedagogical discussion” that are also the

chapters of the book: worldview, values, goals (= outcomes), curriculum (= content), instruction (= pedagogy), and the roles of the teacher and learner.

I appreciated Estes's insights and summaries of the material in Proverbs 1–9. His analyses of the worldview and values embedded in this portion of the book are especially helpful (chaps. 2–3), and are the best chapters in the book.

I have two concerns with this study, however, one literary and one hermeneutical. After determining that Proverbs 1–9 are “a discrete unit” (p. 15), Estes concludes that “it is appropriate to study this section as a unified composition.” He then addresses the literary history of the book of Proverbs, agrees with Kitchen's analysis (*TB* 28 [1977] 69–114), and concludes that the Biblical and ancient Near Eastern evidence best supports an origin in the time of Solomon (p. 17). He fails, however, to justify studying these chapters nearly without reference to the rest of the book (references to the first nine chapters of Proverbs outnumber those to the rest of the book nearly nine to one, according to the Scripture index). What author would like his own work interpreted on the basis of the introduction only? Since, according to Kitchen's analysis (and his own), these chapters are an integral part of the original literary work, they should be interpreted vis-à-vis the rest of the book, or else the case for examining them separately needs to be made more strongly than their identity as a literary unit.

Separating these chapters from the rest of the book leads to some debatable conclusions. For example, the statement that “The ultimate goal for education in Proverbs 1–9 is knowledge of God” (p. 86) mistakes *a* goal for *the* goal. The knowledge of God is certainly an important theme in Proverbs 1–9 (cf. esp. 2:1–6). In light of the entire book, however, the primary purpose of the first nine chapters is motivational—to encourage or inculcate an attitude of *obedience* (which Estes identifies, correctly, as the “fear of the LORD”) to the contents of the entire book (he addresses this briefly as “teachability,” one of the educational “values”). In the context of Proverbs, submission to God refers first to the contents of the entire book and then to Israel's covenantal obligations. The knowledge of God, as the opening verses of chap. 2 state, is presented primarily as a benefit of the search for wisdom.

My second concern is that Estes approaches these chapters via 20th-century pedagogical theory. The categories are therefore *etic* (imposed from without) rather than *emic* (arising from the text), and lead to a search for “embedded” values when discussing, for example, the roles of the teacher and learner. (This *etic* approach is probably also the reason for the repetition in the book—e.g. chaps. 2 [“values”] and 4 [“curriculum”] should be combined.)

His fundamental assumption—that Proverbs is “dominated by the subject of education” (p. 13)—is questionable; this topic, as he admits, “underlies” and is “embedded in” the text. Since, as Estes recognizes, the book of Proverbs was intended to prepare upper-class young men for their role(s) in Israelite society, his discussion would also be greatly strengthened by helping his readers bridge the gap between this original purpose and their own situation(s).

Despite these concerns, Estes is clearly a careful scholar and fine teacher, familiar with the literature of wisdom studies, and especially with the text of Proverbs. His observations on the text of Proverbs 1–9 are cogent and insightful; his conclusions ought to encourage us who teach to ponder how we might think more carefully—more Biblically—about our vocations. *Hear, My Son* is a well-written book that will probably prove more helpful to students of Proverbs than to those interested in educational theory. To such readers I commend his work.

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*Ecclesiastes*. By C. L. Seow. AB 18C. New York: Doubleday, 1997, xxiv + 419 pp., n.p.

Seow's work serves to fill a glaring gap in the Anchor Bible series by replacing the slim 257-page commentary by R. B. Y. Scott (AB 18, 1965). In fact, Scott's volume included commentary on both Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and consisted simply of a series of exegetical notes to his translation. Seow's commentary stands in stark contrast. It is creative, detailed, and subtle. It not only fills the gap in the Anchor Bible series but will no doubt take its rightful place as one of the standard academic commentaries on Ecclesiastes. It is a stimulating and penetrating piece of scholarship.

The general contents of the commentary are as follows: introduction (pp. 3–69; title, canonicity, texts and versions, language, socioeconomic context, authorship, message, Qohelet among the wise); bibliography (pp. 73–92; texts and versions; commentaries; articles, monographs, special studies; ancient Near Eastern sources); translation, notes, and comments (pp. 95–396); indexes (pp. 397–419; authors; subjects; Scriptural and other references; foreign words).

Seow's treatment of standard introductory issues provides many of the highlights of the commentary. His discussion of versions is very helpful in that, among other things, it brings the reader up to date on the fragments found at Qumran. His summary of the language of Ecclesiastes is very handy. He notes *pardes* (2:5) and *pitgam* (8:11) as evidence of Persian influence (p. 12). Moreover, Seow argues that the number of terms in Ecclesiastes that are paralleled only in Aramaic texts of the Persian period strongly suggests that the book stems from this period (*ytrn* "surplus"; *htrn* "deficit"; *hšbn* "account"; *nksyn* "assets"). He notes a number of other Aramaisms as well. His argument on the whole serves as a balanced rejoinder to D. Fredericks's important observation that Aramaisms in Ecclesiastes are not in and of themselves evidence of a postexilic date (*Qoheleth's Language: Re-evaluating Its Nature and Date*). It is in Seow's estimation the sheer abundance of Aramaisms that speaks to the contrary.

To support further a postexilic date for Ecclesiastes, Seow elaborates on observations made as far back as Delitzsch's commentary of 1875, that there are a number of *hapax legomena* and expressions in Ecclesiastes that likely reflect the development of Hebrew in the postexilic period. Seow comments on six phenomena: the frequency of *še-*; exclusive use of <sup>š</sup>*ānî*; the use of <sup>š</sup>*ēt/et*; the feminine demonstrative *zōh*; the 3mp pronominal suffix for feminine plural antecedents; and the negation of the infinitive with <sup>š</sup>*en*. Seow's application of this evidence to the dating issue is quite fair. He does not overplay the evidence, and he is clearly aware of the ambiguities involved. Nevertheless, he clearly sees these linguistic phenomena as supporting a late date for Ecclesiastes. Any arguments to the contrary will have to account for these phenomena as Seow has presented them.

Perhaps most stimulating is Seow's discussion of the possible socio-economic context of Ecclesiastes (pp. 21–36). On the basis of the recurring uses of economic terms (he lists 18 on p. 22) and a number of very suggestive and inviting parallels between Ecclesiastes and a spectrum of Persian period texts, Seow draws the conclusion that Qohelet's language "reflects the volatile economy of his time" (p. 32; see also p. 31). Such an understanding of Qohelet's social backdrop, although certainly not exhaustive of Ecclesiastes as a whole, provides a valuable perspective from which to view this ancient book. Qohelet's words, Seow posits, suggest that he "taught at a time when the average citizen felt vulnerable and powerless before the rich and the political elite" (p. 35). Qohelet's conclusion for his audience is that wealth cannot conquer death. "Wealth is to be enjoyed in the present and people cannot bring their wealth with them when they die" (p. 36).

Seow organizes Ecclesiastes, excluding the superscription and epilogue, according to a two-part scheme, each containing a "reflection" of Qohelet followed by an "ethical"

section. Hence: IA, Reflection: everything is ephemeral and unreliable (1:2–4:16); IB, Ethics: coping with uncertainty (5:1–6:9 [Eng]); IIA, Reflection: everything is elusive (6:10–8:17); IIB, Ethics: coping with risks (9:1–12:8). This structure, although suffering the same fate as any attempt to bring order to Qohelet's thought, is sufficiently broad enough to avoid the charge of over-organization. At the same time it is thoughtful enough to be a helpful heuristic tool.

As for the theology of Ecclesiastes, two of the perennial issues are the meaning of *hebel* and the relationship between the epilogue and the words of Qohelet. As for the former, Seow suggests that *hebel* "does not mean that everything is meaningless or insignificant, but that everything is beyond human apprehension and comprehension" (p. 59). No English word, however, is adequate to convey the nuances of the 38 occurrences of *hebel* in Ecclesiastes, so Seow opts for the traditional term "vanity" for all its occurrences (see p. 102). Seow is correct in attempting to use one English word to translate the word *hebel*, since it forms the *Hauptleitwort* of the book, but it should be questioned whether "vanity," particularly with its connotations for modern ears, does adequate justice to the concept it conveys. (I am more convinced by Fox's translation and defense of the word "absurd" in *Qohelet and His Contradictions*, pp. 29–51.)

As for the latter, Seow sides with those who see the epilogue as essentially in harmony with the theology of Qohelet: "the perspective of the book is one and the same as the framework" (p. 38). Qohelet is not an unorthodox theologian whom the frame-narrator "corrects" in the space of a few verses tacked on at the end of the book. The purpose of the epilogue, rather, is to demonstrate to the reader "that it is possible to hold the perspective of the sages like Qohelet together with the central tenets of Israelite faith" (p. 396).

Space does not allow as thorough a review as this very important commentary deserves. To be sure, there are a number of points in Seow's translation and comments where he would invite vigorous debate, but such is the purpose of any commentary. Indeed, controversy when commenting on Ecclesiastes cannot be avoided. There are a few typographical errors, but these are few and far between. I might also add that the format of the commentary itself too often results in some redundancy (the translation notes and comment section sometimes repeat essentially the same information). Nevertheless, I am very enthusiastic about Seow's work, and it will certainly take its place among the best commentaries in the Anchor Bible series and among commentaries on Ecclesiastes.

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*The Book of Ecclesiastes*. By Tremper Longman III. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 306 pp., \$35.00.

This commentary in the NICOT series is an important addition because it is an evangelical's attempt to take the interpretation of Ecclesiastes as a pessimistic and skeptical book to its ultimate, logical conclusion.

No other OT book provides a greater number of introductory challenges, and Longman avoids very few areas of controversy while balancing details with theological overviews excellently. Matters of date and language are presented somewhat agnostically and are deferred to the exegetical section for any greater resolution. Here the footnotes themselves reflect excellent studies of the complex linguistic matters. He believes the book is likely postexilic. His proposals on the theological intention of Ecclesiastes impressively collate the main remaining issues of authorship, genre, and structure.

The "Text and Commentary" section's main subdivisions reflect Longman's thesis (expressed in terms borrowed from M. Fox's research) that Ecclesiastes is a

frame narrative that corrects the intellectually struggling and unorthodox Qohelet by couching his thinking between the opening and closing orthodox comments of the frame narrator. At this point Longman applies his own research in Akkadian "fictional autobiographies," concluding that Ecclesiastes's frame narrator incorporated this example of Mesopotamian literary tradition for his own purposes. Longman sees some sequence of thought within what he describes as the two fictional "Quest" sections (1:13–2:26, and 3:1–6:9), and then a loosely connected string of subjects titled simply "Qohelet's Wise Advice" (6:10–12:7). However, readers are well served by Longman's objective to present the most coherent Qohelet possible by providing very helpful introductions and summaries for every main division of the pericopes.

Other significant qualities of this commentary are the able translations of each Hebrew structural unit into clear, readable English. The bibliography and indexes are thorough and will serve all levels of further research that any reader would like to pursue.

In the context of recent Ecclesiastes scholarship, Longman is firmly in the camp of those such as Fox and J. Crenshaw who understand Qohelet to be a confused, pessimistic theologian who has no hope of finding a coherent world view. "Meaningless" is the meaning of *hebel* for Longman, and Qohelet's broader theological message is tersely regarded to be, "Life is full of trouble and then you die" (p. 34). The more positive readings by G. Ogden and R. N. Whybray, for example, are considered inadequate given the depth of Qohelet's emotional despair. Any experience of joy that Qohelet might allude to is "simply a narcotic that numbs the recipient to the true nature of reality" (p. 35).

The sources of Qohelet's anguish are "1) death and 2) the inability to control and know the appropriate time to do anything" (p. 33). Consequently, "there is no purpose to doing anything in this fallen world." Longman's Qohelet feels confused, frustrated, joyless, disappointed, chilled to the bone with fear, full of doubt, helpless, and hopeless. There is no consolation for Qohelet, because "Qohelet's world view does not let him take a transcendent yet immanent God into consideration in his quest for meaning" (p. 66). Worse than simply a detached God, however, Qohelet's God is dangerous, a cosmic bully who frustrates the moral order, and is even the cause of some moral evils. For Qohelet, work is evil and life is hateful, and even wisdom is meaningless and unhelpful in the end. Thus for Qohelet, all is utterly meaningless.

On the other hand, Longman's confused Qohelet speaks often of a limited meaning to eating, drinking, and enjoying one's labor. It is gratuitous, however, to qualify these as merely "simple pleasures," as Longman does consistently. Some other aspects of life with relative value are wisdom in general, companionship, decrying oppression, patience, righteousness, self-awareness, wise speech, personal glory, eating for nourishment, diligence, and life itself! Longman's argument goes further than most in retaining an absolute skepticism throughout Qohelet's autobiography, resorting to the gambit of a self-contradicting Qohelet a minimum number of times. Yet, this strained attempt at continuity in chaps. 1–8 inevitably unravels in the commentary on chaps. 9–11, where the concentrated enumeration of proverb-like wisdom must be repeatedly admitted to be relatively valuable. For Longman, the ideas that everything is utter meaninglessness and that there is relative meaningfulness for some aspects of life, are somehow compatible, especially in the mind of one like Qohelet who is supposedly disposed to such contradictions.

Those who would find Longman convincing must accept that utter meaninglessness and relative value are somehow compatible, accept that Qohelet's orthodox statements are only slips in reasoning, not heartfelt confessions, and accept that his confusion about this and many other issues was worthy of massive quotation for a frame narrator. There will be many who will concur with Longman, since current Ecclesiastes scholarship tolerates projecting confusion about the book's meaning onto Qohelet himself.

Any slight negative criticism aside, Longman's contributions to the discussion of Ecclesiastes and its meaning are significant and present a profound perspective on the book that will certainly be influential in its details and as a whole.

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*Romance, She Wrote: A Hermeneutical Essay on Song of Songs.* By André LaCocque. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1998, xvi + 240 pp., \$19.00.

LaCocque's title identifies his two guiding perspectives for his book: (1) the author of the Song is a woman, and (2) LaCocque has "no intention of writing yet another commentary on the Song" (p. 67). Rather, he is concerned with developing what he calls "an exercise in biblical hermeneutics" (p. 68). And that identifies both the strengths and the weaknesses of LaCocque's book.

In a short five-page preface where he briefly discusses the question of canonicity and the tension between the naturalistic and the allegorical approaches to the text, LaCocque sets out his thesis that the author of the Song has borrowed vocabulary and imagery from the rest of the Biblical tradition, especially the prophets, with the deliberate intention of subverting the patriarchal society of late second-temple Hellenistic Judaism.

These basic ideas are developed in an extended (68-page) introductory essay on "Methodological Presuppositions." Using what he defines as an "intertextual" approach, LaCocque rejects any allegorizing, which he says "is not just at some distance from the original intent of the work, but takes us to its extreme opposite" (p. 7), in favor of a midrashic approach that reveals the *mystical* meaning, i.e. the subversive intent of the text (p. 11). Much of his approach is shaped by literary-critical theories that are already passé in disciplines outside Biblical studies, and by the ever-present, but I believe long-discredited, notion that the prophets were the originators of Israel's theological ideas. Relegating the Song to the Hellenistic period and the Torah to the late monarchy and the exilic eras allows him to argue that the author of the Song is drawing on those (earlier) writings for her "subversive" purposes of parodying and secularizing the religious beliefs of the earlier writers. While many of his suggestions are intriguing, I do not find the argument persuasive.

The central section of the book is a series of eight chapters dealing with the individual chapters of the Song. LaCocque departs from most contemporary commentators by seeing the Song as the work of a single author, not the arbitrary juxtaposition of unrelated poems by various writers. This is a welcome change, and in his detailed examination of the text, he makes numerous incisive observations that sustain this dimension of his thesis. He includes many references to both the Hebrew extra-Biblical literature and to ancient Near Eastern parallels.

The penultimate chapter is "An Imaginary Dialogue with Othmar Keel" (Keel, *The Song of Songs* [1994]; see my review in *JETS* 39 (1996) 651–652), whom he takes to task for, among other things, including the Song in the wisdom tradition of Israel, dating it between the eighth and sixth centuries BC, and finding parallels with the Egyptian Love Poetry of the late 2nd millennium BC! LaCocque argues that these positions blur the unique "anti-establishment" motif of the Song.

In the conclusion, LaCocque reiterates his basic position: the (female) author is deliberately subverting the fundamentalist repudiation of female sexuality by turning the arguments of the traditionalists on their heads. Sex (and "love") is fine, either inside

or outside of the marriage covenant. *Eros* on a horizontal level is better than *agape* on the vertical.

LaCocque is an interesting writer, widely read, with lots of stimulating suggestions, who possesses a wonderful way with words. Too bad he never got beyond the mentality of the 1960's sexual "revolution."

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*Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition.* Edited by Craig C. Broyles and Craig A. Evans. 2 vols. SVT 70. Leiden: Brill, 1997, xx + 829 pp., \$153.00.

These two volumes offer an update on the status on Isaianic scholarship for the student, pastor, and professor who have an interest in Isaiah studies. As part of the SVT series, this set also introduces another series entitled "Formation and Interpretation of the OT" (FIOTL). According to the editors, the aim of these two volumes is to "combine the more recent approaches that treat the formation of the final form of the book of Isaiah with the more conventional historical-critical approaches that treat the use of traditions by the book's authors and editors" (p. ix). The material is divided into three sections: (1) the formation and leitmotifs of the book of Isaiah, (2) specific oracles and passages within Isaiah, and (3) the interpretation of Isaiah in late antiquity. The three sections reflect the three chronological states in the composition and transmission of the book of Isaiah normally proposed by the critics. The second section of this set probes the first phase of the "authorship" issue. Several authors of these essays investigate how the "composer" of a given passage used the traditions they inherited (e.g. Exodus, Zion, David). The first section considers the second stage of "editorial shaping," examining how the editors interpreted and shaped these received oracles as they were compiled and gathered into an anthology. The final section of this set explores the third stage of "readers" and "translators" where the Hebrew book of Isaiah serves as the tradition passed on to others.

These two volumes contain 36 essays (part one, 13 essays; part two, 11 essays; part three, 12 essays). The second volume concludes with a thorough bibliography (55 pages), and a helpful index of ancient writings (45 pages) and modern authors (11 pages).

Three of the essays in the first section give special attention to authorship/formation issues. J. Blenkinsopp ("The Servant and the Servants in Isaiah and the Formation of the Book") employs the different uses of "servant" in chaps. 40–66 to support his claim that chaps. 40–54[55] depict an individual prophetic figure who died on account of his beliefs while chaps. 55[56]–66 allude to a specific group who cherished eschatological beliefs and was alienated from the official leadership. W. Holladay ("Was Trito-Isaiah Deutero-Isaiah after all?") and O. Steck ("Autor und/oder Redaktor in Jesaja 56–66") focus on the authorship or redaction of Isaiah 56–66. Two essays in this section deal with reading strategies. Both E. Conrad ("Reading Isaiah and the Twelve as Prophetic Books") and R. Melugin ("The Book of Isaiah and the Construction of Meaning") distance themselves from a grammatical-historical approach of interpreting Scripture in favor of a more open-ended approach. After affirming that written texts deaden the vitality of the oral, Conrad concludes that a written text must be encountered in each new present through reading (pp. 16–17). Although Melugin does not deny the value of "original meanings," he encourages the reader to enlarge their vision and embrace

new horizons of meaning (pp. 54–55), i.e. to reinterpret Isaiah in the manifold varieties of settings offered by the world of the reader.

The majority of essays in this section (eight of 13 essays) give attention to a theme or structure common to the book of Isaiah: the plan of God (W. Brueggemann, “Planned People/Planned Book?”), metaphors (Y. Gitay, “Why Metaphors? A Study of the Texture of Isaiah”), ethics (J. Barton, “Ethics in the Book of Isaiah”), blindness/insight (R. Carroll, “Blindsight and the Vision Thing: Blindness and Insight in the Book of Isaiah”), Jerusalem depicted as a woman (J. Schmitt, “The City as Woman in Isaiah 1–39”), rhetorical questions (J. K. Kuntz, “The Form, Location, and Function of Rhetorical Questions in Deutero-Isaiah”), the kingship of YHWH (T. Mettinger, “In Search of the Hidden Structure: YHWH as King in Isaiah 40–55”), and the concept of righteousness (J. Oswalt, “Righteousness in Isaiah: A Study of the Function of Chapters 55–66 in the Present Structure of the Book”).

Due to space limitations, additional comments will be made concerning only two of these essays. Mettinger’s essay concludes with an excursus that updates his thinking with regard to the “servant song.” He adjusts his former interpretation of 49:5–6 and argues that the “Ebed” denotes the exiled elite of the people that may have a mission to the majority of Israel. Rather than linking the Cyrus oracle with Isaiah 53, he links it with chaps. 51–52. He reaffirms his suggestion that a set of hymnic passages exists in Isaiah 40–55 as well as his skepticism concerning the “servant song” hypothesis. Also, in contrast to the approaches to Isaiah that emphasize the differences between chaps. 56–66 and the rest of the book (in support of a Trito-Isaiah proposal), Oswalt contends that chaps. 56–66 are written in the full knowledge of chaps. 1–55 and serve to unify that corpus. This last section of Isaiah resolves the tensions between chaps. 1–39 and 40–55. In chaps. 1–39 “righteousness” primarily signifies behavior that is according to moral standards. In chaps. 40–55 the term focuses on God’s righteousness, i.e. his adherence to his covenant promises. The final section (chaps. 56–66) combines these two threads by emphasizing that God’s people should live righteously because of God’s righteousness.

Part two contains 11 essays that focus on specific passages in the book of Isaiah. H. Williamson (“Relocating Isaiah 1:2–9”) depicts Isaiah 1 as an invitation to read the prophetic book rather than an introduction to chaps. 1–39 or the book as a whole. J. Limburg (“Swords to Plowshares: Texts and Contexts”) and J. Willis (“Isaiah 2:2–5 and the Psalms of Zion”) both give attention to the similarities between Isa 2:1–5 and Mic 4:1–3 (as well as various psalms). Various other authors examine the following passages: chap. 6 (M. Lind, “Political Implications of Isaiah 6”), 14:12–15 (J. Jensen, “Helel ben Shahaar [Isa 14:12–15] in Bible and Tradition”), 26:13–27:11 (J. Day, “The Dependence of Isaiah 26:13–27:11 on Hosea 13:4–14:10 and Its Relevance to Some Theories of the Redaction of the ‘Isaiah Apocalypse’”), chap. 30 (W. Beuken, “Isaiah 30: A Prophetic Oracle Transmitted in Two Successive Paradigms”), 44:26–28 (C. Broyles, “The Citations of Yahweh in Isaiah 44:26–28”), 56:6 (D. Van Winkle, “An Inclusive Authoritative Text in Exclusive Communities”), 60:1–6 (R. Clements, “‘Arise, Shine; for Your Light Has Come’: A Basic Theme of the Isaianic Tradition”), and chaps. 65–66 (M. Sweeney, “Prophetic Exegesis in Isaiah 65–66”).

The final section of the set, “The Interpretation of Isaiah in Late Antiquity,” considers the text and interpretation of Isaiah in comparison with the Dead Sea Scrolls (E. Ulrich, “An Index to the Contents of the Isaiah Manuscripts from the Judean Desert”; P. Flint, “The Isaiah Scrolls from the Judean Desert”; E. Tov, “The Text of Isaiah at Qumran”; G. Brooke, “Isaiah in the Pesharim and Other Qumran Texts”), the LXX (A. van der Kooij, “Isaiah in the Septuagint”; S. Porter and B. Pearson, “Isaiah through Greek Eyes: The Septuagint of Isaiah”), the Targums and Rabbinic materials (B. Chilton,

"Two in One: Renderings of the Book of Isaiah in Targum Jonathan"; G. Porton, "Isaiah and the Kings: The Rabbis on the Prophet Isaiah"), the Peshitta (A. Gelston, "Was the Peshitta of Isaiah of Christian Origin?"), Josephus (L. Feldman, "Josephus' Portrait of Isaiah"), the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha (M. Knibb, "Isaianic Traditions in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha"), and the NT (C. Evans, "From Gospel to Gospel: The Function of Isaiah in the NT").

Once again, space limitations allow only select comments on certain essays. Ulrich's essay provides an updated list of extant Isaiah passages (but does not include citations of Isaiah found in non-Biblical scrolls). Flint provides a helpful overview of the Isaiah Scrolls discovered between 1947–52 and includes a summary paragraph for each scroll. Tov delineates the significance of the Qumran scrolls of Isaiah for textual transmission and exegesis. Evans (in the longest essay in the set [41 pp.]) devotes the initial third of his essay to overviewing the message of the book of Isaiah and its impact on intertestamental literature. The bulk of the essay gives special attention to Jesus', Mark's, and Paul's use of Isaiah.

This set possesses several strengths. These two volumes introduce the reader to the issues that relate to the text, composition, authorship, and interpretation of Isaiah in a way that no commentary can. Whether one agrees with the conclusions or not, the set exposes the reader to key approaches, issues, and cruxes in Isaianic studies. For example, at a number of junctures, the contributors provide samples of an open-ended interpretive approach to the Biblical text. They not only delineate the theory of this method but also illustrate its use with regard to a specific Biblical text. Oswalt's essay on righteousness represents the best thematic essay. Finally, the third section of the book offers a wealth of information to the Bible scholar who customarily focuses on the Biblical text itself (to the neglect of later texts of antiquity).

My primary concerns arise from my evangelical perspective. Although some of this hermeneutical debate rages in our circles, the commitment of most of the contributors to a far-reaching "reader-response" hermeneutic is unsettling. The practitioners of this hermeneutic believe that various life settings trigger different interpretations, all of which have equal legitimacy. Value is placed on finding the new horizons based on different life experiences. The devaluing of "original" meaning removes much objectivity from the interpretive process.

This problem aside, the two volumes ably accomplish their purposes of examining the book of Isaiah by making use of "final-form" approaches along with customary historical-critical approaches. These volumes helpfully set the stage for Isaianic studies in a detailed fashion that no commentary can hope to accomplish. Any serious student of Isaiah's prophecies will better understand the interpretive landscape of the book of Isaiah by carefully considering these essays.

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*It's Still Greek to Me: An Easy-to-Understand Guide to Intermediate Greek.* By David Alan Black. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 191 pp., \$14.99 paper.

Black has authored numerous books, many of which target learning and using Greek in teaching and ministry. His typical audience is the student generally intimidated by the thought of studying Greek. His volumes are inexpensive, accessible, and useable. The present volume fills the gap for the need for an intermediate grammar in this pattern.

What is distinctive here? Organization of material comes to mind first. Black organizes the material in ways that the language is actually used rather than the arcane

categories of grammatical analysis. When grammatical analysis becomes necessary for understanding, Black strives to be concise and brief. He starts with the basics. For example, the first chapter is about English grammar, not Greek. The focus is on parts of speech and their functions, reminiscent of the pattern in Wenham's grammar. The second chapter is on the sentence and its parts. Subsequent chapters deal with the Greek noun system (case, adjectives, pronouns, articles, prepositions), the verb system (inflection, interpretation, infinitives, participles, function words), and clauses. Each chapter concludes with brief exercises tailored to illustrate the discussion, a list of key terms used in the discussion, and a brief bibliography pointing to other discussions of the topic, such as in Robertson, Dana and Mantey, BDF, Zerwick, and Wallace. The usefulness of the book is increased by two appendixes summarizing verb conjugations and principal parts in several indexes (subject, Greek word, Scripture).

The other distinction of this volume is its overall tone. Black is low key. He writes to lower the frustration and intimidation of learning and applying Greek. He seeks to inculcate a "can-do" attitude using simplified explanations and a dash of humor, without being flippant. The balance between the serious study of God's Word and a light touch on the work is maintained well. Greek students will profit from this small volume, and the Greek instructor should as well.

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*The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament.* By Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., and Cleon L. Rogers, III. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 652 pp., \$39.99.

Cleon L. Rogers, Jr., edited the *Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament* (1982), derived from F. Rienecker's original German work. Rogers, now retired, has worked in concert with his son, Cleon L. Rogers, III, to produce a new volume that completely changed the very character of the original, as acknowledged in the foreword.

Some aspects of the new work are commendable. The grammatical and lexical information has been expanded generally and updated with new Greek resources. Further, the Goodrick-Kohlenberger numbers are included with the Greek words, which enables the new work to tie into the NIV Exhaustive Concordance and broadens the usefulness of the work for students not trained in Greek. Other aspects of this new addition, however, are not as commendable.

The original volume was a conveniently sized handbook—eminently portable and useable. I appreciated this volume and used it regularly for rapid reading of the Greek NT. Be forewarned that the new volume is *not* a handbook. The new format is a large (9.5 × 7.5 × 1.5 inches), heavy (3.3 lbs.), library reference volume. The material, especially the exegetical, has been greatly expanded (hence, the addition of "exegetical" to the title). The result is a somewhat unwieldy volume in which the original grammatical and lexical resource has been transformed into a collection of mini-commentaries on each book of the NT. The handbook genius of the original has been destroyed.

Further, the tendentious exegetical material of the original has not been relieved. The editors are aware of various approaches in NT studies. Various authors have been cited, the editors note carefully, without the citation indicating approbation of that author's view. This might indicate a balanced and clear indication of exegetical points at issue in debated texts throughout the volume, but this is not the case. Thus, the very students now targeted—those untrained in Greek—are at the mercy of the "exegesis" offered.

This new volume has some commendable features, but I am sticking with my original handbook. This old companion is quite worn now, and the material, to be sure, is dated at points. Yet, I can actually carry the resource along with my Greek text. Besides, I already have excellent commentaries presenting debated points of exegesis in my own library for more in-depth study. I will recommend these commentaries to my students who want more depth than grammatical and lexical information alone can provide.

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*The Jesus Tradition in Q.* By Dale C. Allison, Jr. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 1997, xii + 243 pp., \$27.00.

Rejecting J. Kloppenborg's sapiential core for Q, a foundation for much of the thinking of the Jesus Seminar, Allison builds on D. Zeller's chapter in *Logia: Les paroles de Jesus—The Sayings of Jesus* (1982). Zeller argues that "the kernel of many of the sayings groups was composed and transmitted by wandering and wonderworking *missionaries*" (italics his; quoted on p. 8). Allison is thus closer to the apocalyptic school that runs from Schweitzer to Sanders and Wright than to the sapiential view that runs from Wrede to the Jesus Seminar.

Almost one-third of the book is made up of a long and expansive opening chapter on "The Compositional History of Q," a most enlightening survey of American, British, German, Polish, and Japanese scholarship. This chapter gives balance to the widely publicized and predominantly American view that the Jesus of the Q tradition was a Cynic sage or some other variation of the view that he originally was primarily in the wisdom tradition. That view rejects the eschatological and apocalyptic sayings of the synoptic tradition as almost completely a creation of the early Church.

Though six of the nine chapters of this book have appeared in scholarly journals in Europe, the long first chapter and two others—chap. 3 on four of the beatitudes in Q 10:2–26 as a unified composition, and chap. 5 on the multiple meanings of the pericope on the returning spirit in Q 11:34–36—appear in print for the first time. A shorter version of chap. 1, however, was presented at postgraduate seminars at the Universities of Aberdeen, Durham, Glasgow, and St. Andrews in the spring of 1996, where various NT scholars read the manuscript and made suggestions that led to a modification of Allison's thesis in a number of places.

That opening chapter begins with reasons for the rejection of Kloppenborg's argument for an early sapiential recension of Q, widely known as Q<sup>1</sup>. Allison backs up his conclusion by careful and thorough analyses of the five sections and 42 pericopes into which Q has been divided. He concludes that one may tentatively reconstruct behind Q an old document of instruction and encouragement for missionaries that was probably drawn up by a literate teacher to train illiterate wandering emissaries of the Jesus movement. This original document was then probably expanded and updated in two later stages by various additions to make it more pertinent to a new audience and new situation (Q<sup>2</sup> and Q<sup>3</sup>).

Unlike some Jesus-Seminar representatives, Allison does not see the content of Q to be opposed to those of Matthew and Luke, since, after all, they both embrace its contents as one of their major sources. A detailed analysis of the language of the three stages of Q leads Allison to the conclusion that Q in its entirety is strongly Semitic and draws on materials that were originally in Aramaic. He argues for a date of final com-

position in the 40s on the basis that 1 Thessalonians (AD 50) appears to be familiar with its contents. Though Q<sup>1</sup> is an excellent source for the historical Jesus, the two later stages show signs of secondary expansion and reworking by the early Church that later led to “uninhibited creativity.” Q<sup>1</sup>, in fact, may have been the “oracles” (*ta logia*) that Papias says Matthew used.

The remaining chapters all focus on specific pericopes of Q: the Sermon on the Plain (chap. 2), four beatitudes (chap. 3), the missionary discourse (Q 10:2–16; chap. 4), the returning spirit (chap. 5), the eye as a lamp (Q 11:34–36; chap. 6), the hairs of your head as numbered (Q 12:7a; chap. 7), from east to west (Q 13:28–29; chap. 8), and the forsaken house (Q 13:34–35; chap. 9). In chap. 2 Allison attacks H. D. Betz’s conclusion in his massive and learned *The Sermon on the Mount* that Matthew and Luke make use of originally separate sayings collections that were later joined to Q. Instead, he argues that the Sermon on the Mount “is thoroughly Matthean” (p. 74). He sees Luke’s core as existing before Q but being greatly expanded by the addition of a beatitudes preface and the construction of a conclusion. In chap. 3 he argues that the *Gospel of Thomas* reflects knowledge of the canonical beatitudes. He rejects both minimalists and maximalists on the influence of the role of the Jesus tradition on Paul (chap. 4). The small unit on the returning spirit reflects multiple meanings, not just what Jesus originally intended (chap. 5). In a wide-ranging chapter (6), Allison marshals evidence that the eye is a lamp not by allowing light in but by shining into an otherwise dark place. Chapter 7, the briefest, suggests that the saying about the hairs of the head being numbered refers to human evil and ignorance. Those coming from east and west are, contrary to Jeremias, diaspora Jews, not Gentiles (chap. 8). The two versions about the forsaken house suggest that divine judgment is not the final word, but a conclusion to an implicit call to Jerusalem to repent (chap. 9).

The contents of this book represent NT scholarship at its very best. Those who reject the very idea of Q will, of course, probably not read it, but they will miss a lot of careful exegesis. Evangelical scholars such as N. T. Wright would legitimately question the widely held view that the early Church created as much of the Q material as Allison suggests. But along with the recent works of Catchpole and Tuckett, this book is indispensable reading for those who want to know more about the sayings of Jesus and how they were incorporated in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. We still await an evangelical work on Q.

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*The Book of Revelation*. By G. K. Beale. NIGTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, lxiv + 1245 pp., \$75.00.

Biblical commentaries have increased dramatically in size recently. If Beale’s massive tome had appeared a decade earlier, its little-short-of-awe-inspiring breadth and depth would likely have set it apart as “dominant” within that period (perhaps even a generation) of evangelical commentary publishing on the Apocalypse. Instead, it emerged in an environment that had already seen Thomas’s two-volume (1992, ’95) dispensational treatment, which is almost as long as Beale’s, and Aune’s critically speculative three-volume (1997, ’98, ’98) WBC contribution, which is about 300 pages longer. So, in a publishing arena filling with such “heavy-weights” (i.e. mega-commentaries), a few readable “bantam-weights” (e.g. Talbert [1994] and Michaels [1997]) and some varied “middle-weights” (e.g. Mounce’s NICNT revision [1998] and Easley’s Holman NT

Commentary offering [1999]), Beale's work must carve out whatever niche it will have (i.e. in terms of long-term staying power, after the initial publication buzz dies down) in other ways.

That should present no real problem, though, since Beale's commentary exhibits a host of strengths. Perhaps the place to start, though, is in regard to Beale's background for writing this huge commentary. I do not believe that it is an overstatement to assert that G. K. Beale is the most qualified evangelical to comment on Revelation in this generation. Appearing since 1980, including his published Cambridge dissertation on the use of Daniel in Revelation (University Press of America, 1984), has been the programmatic publication of over 20 of Beale's articles, entries, books, or significant reviews related to the Apocalypse.

The commentary has many notable strengths. First, we can highlight the extensive bibliography (36 pages, but still not as exhaustive as Aune's). It is well balanced, far more so than Aune's, which, with a few exceptions, displays but a "loud silence" with regard to evangelical scholarship on the Apocalypse, including virtually ignoring Beale's many substantial contributions; conversely, Beale's listing includes ten of Aune's works. The lone quibble here is that, by the time Beale's volume was released, the bibliography was essentially three years out of date (more below). Second, for the most part, the excellent introductory essays range wider than most commentary introductions. Some are merely workmanlike (e.g. "Date" and "Authorship"), but most are extraordinary, definitely ranking with the best treatments I have seen (e.g. "Situation, Purpose and Theme," "Genre," "Use of the OT," "Structure and Plan," and "Rev. 1:19 as an Interpretative Key"). In a couple of noteworthy cases ("Text" and "Grammar"), Beale's material is at least as accessible and insightful as Aune's, although more compact. Third, numerous and varied charts dot the introductory material and almost always visualize the relevant material well. Fourth, smaller print signals technical excursions that often reflect Beale's strength in relation to extra-Biblical sources. Fifth, since the series editors' foreword (p. xvii) states that the NIGTC volumes are "to provide a theological understanding of the text," Beale is to be congratulated for laying out the most sustained and compelling case for amillennialism (Beale prefers the title "inaugurated millennialism," p. 973) from Revelation that I have ever read. Though it falls short of being ultimately persuasive, in my estimation, it undoubtedly will persuade quite a few readers.

Having highlighted these positive aspects of Beale's work, there are several more-than-trifling concerns that should be registered. First, it becomes fairly clear that a number of the introductory essays link up to present a comprehensive argument for Beale's theological position. As stated above, this is generally a strength. However, the foreword assumes the theology will be "*based on historical-critical-linguistic exegesis*" (p. xvii; italics mine). Therein lies the rub. Since Beale's interwoven essays prove somewhat selective exegetically, often more topical/thematic in nature and very far-reaching in their conclusions and implications, it seems fair to say that the introductory material subtly reorients the commentary from the expected developing *inductive* methodology to closer to a *deductive* approach. This does not mean there is not verse-by-verse exegesis in the commentary proper. But, frankly, surprisingly little in any of the crucial passages is really "fresh," given the involved discussions in the introductory material. For the most part, Beale's "front-end load" theological conclusions are virtually regurgitated later with more detailed argumentation.

Second, a close reading of Beale's brief and vague apologetic for his eclectic "modified idealism" (p. 49) alongside his stimulating essay on "Interpretation of Symbolism" (pp. 50-69) raises a red flag. This is because Beale's eclectic "modification" of the historically problematic idealist approach (typically leading to free-wheeling allegorization) which supposedly shuts the traditional "front door" to allegorical interpretation

of the Apocalypse, is still at its heart idealism. And his “four levels of communication” (pp. 52–55) subtly but effectively leave open the “back door” for symbol-based semi-allegorizing. So, when the dust settles, what Beale gains hermeneutically with one hand he more or less takes away with the other.

Third, Beale’s assumption that there are five “synonymously parallel visions” (p. 135) in Daniel (supposedly chaps. 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10–12), which serve as a pattern for five presumed parallel sections in Revelation (and, most significant theologically, recapitulation in Revelation 19–20, the hermeneutical basis for his “inaugurated” [amillennial] view), is, if I understand him (see his reasoning on pp. 135–41), startlingly sloppy thinking by a scholar of Beale’s acumen. Though similar in surface symbolism, the visions in Daniel 2, 7, and 9 move forward with progressive clarification to events related to a *fourth* kingdom (Rome), then eschatological events, while chaps. 8 and 11–12 focus on the *third* kingdom (Greece, though the clear reference to eschatological resurrection in 12:2, if nothing else, reflects a “telescoping” to the end of the age). Hence, Beale’s purported synonymous parallelism falls flat and, thus, if there *is* an implied pattern from Daniel, it would seem to be surface symbolic similarity and progressive clarification (of detail) *without* chronological recapitulation.

Fourth, the disparity in length in sectional titles is bafflingly inconsistent. Some are compressed (perhaps overly so). Several are in excess of 40 words, reading like fare from a mind-numbing German treatise. Quite a few are lengthy complex sentences, but, inexplicably, without periods.

A couple of items that are neither clearly strengths nor weaknesses, but certainly relevant observations, have to do with Beale’s intriguing choices for the Greek and English texts he utilized. While the book’s dust jacket proclaims that the NIGTC volumes are based on the (current) text of the UBS *Greek New Testament*, Beale decided to use the Nestle-Aland 26th edition instead. Similarly, in an era in which the NIV seems almost omnipresent in evangelical publishing, Beale chose to use the NASB for translations beyond his own renderings (p. xxii). Refreshingly, these appear to be the determinations of one unaffected by “company-man” or “politically-correct” pressures.

In conclusion, for all the strengths of Beale’s commentary (which definitely far outweigh my stated aspects of concern!), it simply does not fit the mould of either a readily usable preaching resource or a classroom textbook (with the possible exception of certain multiterm upper-level or doctoral courses). This is indeed a very important work, both as a reflection of the maturing of evangelical scholarship generally, and in regard to the study of Revelation specifically. However, completely aside from its steep price, the logistical question remains: Getting beyond the small cadre of commentating idealists, how can Beale’s *Revelation* realistically be “customized” for a wider audience, to be helpful for pastoral/pulpit ministry or less-than-advanced coursework use.

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*Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*. By Norman L. Geisler. Baker Reference Library. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 841 pp., \$49.99.

Unlike other volumes in the Baker Reference Library, this one has a single author. All the others are edited (mostly by Walter A. Elwell). This in itself is an astounding accomplishment, but to realize that this is only one of a long series of substantial philosophical/theological works by this author is to pause in gratitude to God for the

gift of Norman Geisler to the Christian world. His work has far exceeded the impact of E. J. Carnell, and though often controversial, his contribution to philosophical theology and Christian apologetics is truly noteworthy.

Initially many thought this *Encyclopedia* would be a reiteration of much of Geisler's previous work, and of course one finds a defense of his characteristic views (e.g. the cosmological argument, the problem of evil, and the physical nature of the resurrection of Christ). Yet even in these articles I found fresh presentations of Geisler's mature thinking on these issues.

Included are summaries of terms, aspects of Biblical criticism, subjects, people, and themes that are relevant to the field of Christian apologetics and the philosophy of religion. Carnell, for example, receives more than twelve columns of text, and C. S. Lewis gets ten columns. Articles also appear, for example, on "Alleged Errors in the Bible" (almost twelve columns), "Canonicity" (more than ten columns), "Miracles" (almost forty pages), and "Evolution" (almost ten pages plus twelve more on "Creation"); twenty-five pages are devoted to various aspects of the resurrection of Christ. Treatments are given of terms like indeterminism, Molinism (evaluated negatively, of course), and causality. People covered by lengthy article-reviews include William F. Albright, Alfarabi, Thomas J. J. Altizer, Karl Barth, Sigmund Freud, Jonathan Edwards, John Dewey, Herman Dooyeweerd, Ayn Rand, Bernard Ramm, and Maimonides. Again I found fresh material (e.g. the claim that thesis/antithesis/synthesis was not Hegel's philosophical methodology). Geisler's insights on Francis Schaeffer, Martin Luther, and Thomas Jefferson were helpful.

A special feature of the volume is its emphasis on Islam and on the *Qur'an* as a rival to Holy Scripture. Numerous articles are found on Muhammad and related topics. New Age movements, however, are simply treated as a part of other headings (such as polytheism, neopaganism, pantheism, Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, and pantheism). "New Age" needs its own article.

The reader must realize that this is an "encyclopedia" from Geisler's point of view. Most often I nod in agreement, but the articles are not objective or simply descriptive (as many encyclopedias try to be). Each article is a short essay that describes and evaluates issues from Geisler's evangelical version of a Thomistic and moderate-Calvinist view. In the article "Existentialism," for example, Geisler gets a little carried away, perhaps, and claims that Thomas Aquinas was an existentialist *par excellence* since Thomas portrayed God as pure existence; that is, pure actuality with no potentiality. Perhaps I misread the *Summa Theologiae* Ia. 3, 4, but I thought Thomas would not distinguish existence and essence in God and thus would not prioritize existence as existentialists do.

There are a few other nits to pick. For example, not all of the biographical entries have dates. I thought the articles "Nihilism" and "Special Revelation" were surprisingly short. With so much on Jesus Christ and Mohammed, I was surprised to find no article on Moses, though there is an article on the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and two on Pharaoh (one of which is actually on divine determinism). The editors failed to be consistent with some of their headings; for example, it should be "Apologetics, Experiential" instead of "Experiential Apologetics." And why do we have "Barnabas, Gospel of" but "Gospel of Thomas, The"? Even the marginal headers (which are supposed to name the first article on the left page and the last on the right page) are sometimes incorrect (e.g. pp. 234–235). The article "Foundationalism" is good but incomplete. There is no reference, for example, to the so-called broad/narrow distinction (as argued by Nash), and there at least should have been a cross-reference to the article "Proper Basicality" (which is also very brief).

Apparently a decision was made not to include articles on contemporary evangelical writers such as Craig, Habermas, Moreland, or Nash; on the other side, Antony Flew

is included. The bibliography, however, does include many titles by these evangelical apologists.

Overall I want to commend this volume as a “must-have” reference work. It should not be one’s only reference source, but it is an excellent place to start. Nothing else I know of covers so well so much material relevant to Christian apologetics.

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*The C. S. Lewis Readers’ Encyclopedia*. Edited by Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 464 pp., \$22.99.

Celebrating the centennial of C. S. Lewis’s birth in 1998, we have witnessed, perhaps, the crest of publishing regarding Lewis. Truth is, Lewis has proved an increasingly popular and durable item—as author and topic—in religious publishing since his death in 1963. And while there is no abatement, surely, in Lewis as subject, interest appears to have reached a feverish pitch leading to 1998, as the sea of adulation rolled in great waves. Part of this tide is Zondervan’s offering *The C. S. Lewis Readers’ Encyclopedia* (hereafter *CSLRE*), a handsome, reasonably priced reference volume edited by Jeffrey D. Schultz and John G. West, Jr.

Given Lewis’s standing, therefore, in the canon of contemporary Christianity, if not academia, Schultz, a reference editor, and West, assistant professor of political science at Seattle Pacific University, designed the *CSLRE* “to help the reader get more out of his reading Lewis—to gain a deeper and richer understanding of Lewis’s own work and thinking” (p. 8). Moreover, the editors also offer additional information concerning those—in personal contact and in reading and education—who influenced Lewis. So, the *CSLRE* “helps facilitate this wider investigation by offering entries on hundreds of related and interconnecting facets of Lewis’s intellectual and literary interests” (p. 8).

The wide scheme, then, is to give readers, succinctly, Lewis, his writings, and those people and ideas that propelled him. The *CSLRE* commences with a broad “Brief Biography” (pp. 9–65) by John Bremer. This sketch is comprehensive, salted with details, and tart, presenting Lewis not as some superficial saint, sanitized, bleached, and processed for consumption, like a caricatured plastic toy in a child’s meal from a fast food restaurant, but flesh, with failure—such as his relationship with his father—and foibles, such as his sexuality and associations, occasionally rough-edged, with colleagues and other contemporaries. Overall, Bremer’s is a solid introduction and will ignite in those who have never tackled a full-blown biography of Lewis the desire to obtain one.

Following the biography, the substance of *CSLRE* is comprised of 370 pages on Lewis’s writings and those individuals and concepts that affected him as writer, thinker, teacher, and Christian. In this great bulk, arranged alphabetically not topically, readers—and that is *CSLRE*’s concern—encounter everything from a precis concerning *The Abolition of Man* to a note on William Butler Yeats. While it is true that other people and writers are discussed—for example, Aristotle (p. 86), “Fred” Paxford (p. 315), and Dorothy L. Sayers (pp. 362–363), as well as ideas or concepts such as prayer (pp. 331–333) and hierarchy (pp. 203–204)—the accounts of Lewis’s writings dominate the text.

All of Lewis’s extant published works are covered, and several instances provide sufficient details in *CSLRE*’s methodology. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, the initial Narnia book, is summarized and examined trenchantly, if abruptly (pp. 253–255), by Paul Ford, an expert on the Narnian compositions. Ford capsulizes the plot of the novel, giving more away than possibly he should, offers bits of criticism, sprinkling

references to other Lewis titles throughout, and concludes with a bibliography, relating secondary works to the considered title (sometimes these bibliographies contain citations to additional works by Lewis). Other writings, such as book reviews and letters—unless a collection, such as *C. S. Lewis: Letters to Children* (pp. 109–110)—are given shorter, but similar treatment, substantially deleting criticism and internal references while frequently citing works in a bibliography. Good examples are “Poetic Licence (Letter)” and a book review of *The Poetry of Search and the Poetry of Statement* (p. 327). Lewis’s poems vary in their handling, depending on length; *Dymer*, appropriately, receives expansive venting (pp. 144–146). Likewise, Lewis’s essays are represented from a few lines—“A Dream” (p. 143)—to *God in the Dock* (pp. 182–183), which is dismembered according to its contents; that is, each essay has a separate classification. Throughout the volume appear dark printed *see references* to related subjects which avoids tangles within the bibliographies.

Although they do not detract greatly from the excellence of this work, some problems mar the *CSLRE*. First, there is a small, yet nagging, matter of inclusions and exclusions. For example, is it really necessary to comment on many of the forces which influenced Lewis? Why are America, Jung, and Courtney Edward Moore included, despite the latter’s shadow over his wife, Lewis’s apparent paramour? Again, in this line, why are Walter Hooper and Clyde Kilby listed but not, say, Kathryn Lindskoog, James Como, or William Griffin? Why separate entries for Little Lea (p. 257) and the Martlets (p. 266) but not Aslan or Narnia? Why have an eyrie-like snapshot of “C. S. Lewis: The Man” (pp. 246–247), when Bremer’s condensed life consumes nearly a seventh of the book already? Another problem comes via several jumbles. Confusion pervades the section on Letters (pp. 235–245) as it does the entire division of Entry Guides in the index (pp. 452–461). Similarly, a minor distraction arises in not finding items where one might anticipate them. A case in point is Socratic Club, which is listed, without a *see reference*, under its proper name, Oxford University Socratic Club (p. 311). Lastly, a claim could be made that outstanding fictional characters from the Lewis *corpus*, such as Peter Pevensie or Elwin Ransom, might have been awarded space distinguished from the novels.

Negative criticism of the *CSLRE* can be whisked away, however. When grasped in its totality, this is conspicuous reference handiwork. The writing is crisp, direct, knowledgeable, and uniformly incisive throughout, authored by a company of competent, studied Lewis scholars (see pp. 462–464). Even miniature pieces possess modest sparkle. Moreover, merely as a work of printing, this encyclopedia exhibits a fine edge from the pristine distinctions in type fonts to the copious bibliographic citations to the inclusion of photographic reproductions of Lewis’s books’ covers. Explicit charts mark the *CSLRE*: p. 103, showing to whom Lewis’s books were dedicated; pp. 168–170, sorting the plays and films about Lewis; and pp. 271–272, giving a breakdown of the BBC Radio Broadcast talks that correspond to their chapters in *Mere Christianity*. Lastly, two appendixes enhance the narrative. The first details book dealers, centers, societies, journals, and ministries connected or exclusive to Lewis (p. 435–444). Appendix B is a Lewis Timeline, extending from the birth of Lewis’s mother in 1862 to the death of Maureen Moore—Lady Dunbar of Hemp-riggs—in 1997 (pp. 445–451).

Whether one is a seasoned or novice reader of C. S. Lewis, the *CSLRE* is an agreeable and serviceable addition to the literature concerning him. True, it is supplemental to the writings of one of this century’s most recognized, lasting, and potent authors, but like its headwaters, it flows, exudes joy about its subject, and guides us past ourselves.

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*Reformed Confessions Harmonized, with an Annotated Bibliography of Reformed Doctrinal Works.* Edited by Joel R. Beeke and Sinclair B. Ferguson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 271 pp., \$19.99 paper.

Many years ago in a course on the Westminster Standards taught by Dr. Morton H. Smith, I worked with the long, awkward pages of his cut and paste, spiral bound, home-made harmony of the *Westminster Confession* and *Catechisms* with the *Three Forms of Unity*. It was very helpful to see these Reformed doctrinal and didactic compositions laid side-by-side as we studied the various *loci*. I wished then (though thankful indeed for Dr. Smith's excellent idea), that someone had thought to do such a harmony in a more attractive, uniform, durable, and convenient format. Well, my wish (and more) has now been granted in the work of Joel Beeke and Sinclair Ferguson. Beeke is a prolific writer and editor, and Ferguson is a widely known and appreciated author in evangelical circles.

This book contains the *Three Forms of Unity*—that is, the *Belgic Confession of Faith* (1561), the *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563), and the *Canons of Dort* (1618–1619)—the *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1646–1647), and *Shorter and Larger Catechisms* (1647), laid out in chronological order across two facing pages, from left to right. There is also a brief and helpful historical introduction to these confessions as well as a rather extensive and carefully selected annotated bibliography that follows the topical organization of the *Belgic Confession*.

The editors have chosen these seven confessional or catechetical documents because they represent the fruit of the various branches of the European Reformation tradition (Swiss, British, and Dutch-German) and are widely known, used, and adhered to in the sundry Reformed denominations today. For any student or teacher of dogmatics, symbolics, or historical theology, this work will prove a useful tool.

Ferguson's introductions to the respective documents are pithy and help immunize the unwary beginner against certain myths that are still, unfortunately, afoot today in the study of historical theology. For instance, he points out that the *Belgic Confession's* "objective" doctrinal arrangement does not undercut its warm, experiential tone. He resists the temptation, to which many succumb, to pit the *Heidelberg Catechism* against its British Calvinistic counterparts—while rightly stressing its subjective, mild and irenic quality. He properly identifies the *Canons of Dort* as "Calvinism's five answers to the five errors of Arminianism" (as opposed to a comprehensive presentation of Calvinism) and makes no attempt to distance Calvin's theology from Dort's doctrinal emphases, rather saying that "they lie at the heart of the Reformed faith." To hear some say it, the Reformed tradition has always believed in "the real presence," but Ferguson correctly notes the *Second Helvetic Confession's* accent on the spiritual, not carnal, reception of Christ in the Christian's participation in the Supper. He defends the *Westminster Confession* from the multitudinous and overwrought accusations of cold scholasticism while acknowledging the *Confession* as a high point in the development of federal (or covenant) theology and commending it as an "outstanding expression of classical Reformed theology." He compliments the *Shorter and Larger Catechisms* (a bane to some) and duly notices their grasp and incorporation of the doctrine of union with Christ even in their accentuation of the demand for Christian obedience.

Indeed, as one reads through these historic confessional statements side-by-side, one is pushed by the primary sources themselves to embrace the Muller thesis of the development of Reformed theology. That is, the substantial unity and continuity of Reformed theology from Calvin to Westminster, from the sixteenth-century Reformation to the seventeenth-century Protestant Scholastics, is confirmed. In a day and time in which many of our theological graduate students are painfully unfamiliar with the

repository of historical and creedal theology, this volume is a welcome aid in providing light from old times.

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*The Remaking of Evangelical Theology.* By Gary Dorrien. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998, 262 pp., \$24.00 paper.

Evangelical theology has not generally commanded the attention of those from mainline theological traditions. Theologians and historians who narrate the intellectual and social history of the movement have usually been evangelicals themselves. However, there is a ferment within the movement that outsiders are beginning to notice. One of those is Gary Dorrien, a professor and the Chair of Religious Studies at Kalamazoo College, who tells the captivating story of a growing movement within the movement. *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* is not just another chronicle of the history of evangelical thought; it is a sobering account of the unrest, questioning, and probing by leading evangelical theologians into the fundamental issues and assumptions that have shaped their own tradition.

Dorrien distinguishes three strands of evangelicalism: (a) classical (or Puritan), (b) pietistic, and (c) fundamentalist. In view of the diversity within evangelicalism, Dorrien finds it ironic that evangelicalism has been “poorly suited to affirm pluralism of any kind” (p. 3). In addition to the three basic types of evangelicalism, Dorrien argues for a fourth type, which he calls “postconservative” or “progressive.” He contends that while modern evangelical theology has been dominated by the third type, “some of the most creative and promising developments in contemporary evangelicalism” are coming from the fourth type (p. 6). He views the creative ferment taking place as a “sign of health and vitality in a postmodern situation” (p. 11).

Dorrien notes that the process of self-criticism is inherent within the tradition. Carl Henry and Edward Carnell both sought to make “evangelical fundamentalism” worthy of intellectual respect by returning to a classical Protestantism without separatism and millennialism. The self-criticism that Henry and Carnell set in motion has opened up various critical evangelical options that continue to question the presuppositions of doctrinal fundamentalism. Some are rethinking and appropriating the insights of Karl Barth (e.g. Donald Bloesch). Some are questioning the Reformed orientation of much of evangelical theology (e.g. William J. Abraham, Clark Pinnock). Others are attempting to reconstruct evangelical theology in light of the postmodern critique of epistemological foundationalism (e.g. Stanley Grenz, Nancey Murphy).

Dorrien’s story of the evangelical movement begins with the development of fundamentalism in which he covers such topics as the Old Princeton theology, dispensationalism, the heresy trials, separationism, and the fundamentalist-modernist controversy. He then moves the discussion to the efforts of neoevangelicals beginning in the 1940s to make evangelicalism academically credible. Dorrien leads the reader through the intriguing story of Fuller Seminary with detailed accounts of Carnell, Henry, and Bernard Ramm. Dorrien comments, “In the process of working out what it means to be evangelical but not fundamentalist, the Fuller theologians and other evangelicals of their generation opened the door to religious currents that today are raising the prospect of a paradigmatically different kind of evangelicalism” (p. 47).

In the process of telling the story, Dorrien touches on various concerns such as feminism, social involvement, politics, evolution, hell, and inclusivism. However, his major focus throughout is on inerrancy and the nature of Scripture. Dorrien realizes that

rethinking the doctrine of Scripture is essential to the remaking of evangelical theology. While many evangelicals still make inerrancy the litmus test for being an evangelical, he notes that prominent evangelical theologians of the past, such as James Orr, have repudiated this claim. Even inerrantists such as Carl Henry denounce making inerrancy the “superbadge of evangelical orthodoxy” (p. 119). For Henry, inerrancy is a logical deduction from the nature of God rather than an explicit teaching of Scripture (pp. 114, 121). Because of this, he is willing to embrace such non-inerrantists as G. C. Berkouwer, George Ladd, and F. F. Bruce as evangelicals (p. 119). Dorrien notes that theologians who maintain a strong inerrancy position are forced to qualify what they mean. The lists of endless qualifications lead others to redefine the term, making inerrancy refer only to salvation, the intent of Scripture, or the like. Dorrien comments that “the trend in evangelical theology is clearly away from strict-inerrancy doctrine” (p. 205).

Dorrien also recounts the pilgrimage of Clark Pinnock, who has now joined the new generation of postmodern-oriented evangelicals, “to rethink the epistemological assumptions of evangelical orthodoxy” (p. 145). He also discusses the work of William J. Abraham, who is one of the key figures in what Robert Brow calls the “evangelical megashift” (*Christianity Today*, 2/19/90). Dorrien has hopes that through the effort of these and other theologians a new kind of evangelicalism will emerge that will rethink how to express the evangelical tradition of antimodernism in a postmodern context (p. 183). He concludes that a significant segment of evangelical theology is turning away from “theology as polemic” to what Hans Frei called a “generous orthodoxy” (p. 209).

Some may question Dorrien’s treatment of the Reformers. After developing the point that Luther and Calvin were not that concerned with precise factuality of the text, Dorrien simply mentions that on occasion they spoke of inspiration as dictation. No attempt is made to reconcile these seemingly disparate comments. Also, one wonders if it is legitimate to make assertions regarding the trends of the evangelical movement (such as away from strict inerrancy) based on a few selected theologians. What constitutes a trend? How representative are these few theologians of the movement as a whole? And what does he mean by the expression “critical mass,” which he uses several times (e.g. p. 151)? Critical mass of what?

Despite these few troubling comments, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology* is an outstanding contribution that will help move evangelical and mainline theologians toward the mutual understanding and dialogue that Mark Ellingsen appealed for in *The Evangelical Movement* (Augsburg, 1988). The account is provocative and written in a lucid and engaging style. In addition, it is well documented and contains a helpful index. The book should be required reading in every course in evangelical theology. Highly recommended.

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*These Three Are One: The Practice of Trinitarian Theology.* Challenges in Contemporary Theology. By David Cunningham. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998, 368 pp., \$29.95 paper.

In the first volume of Blackwell’s Challenges in Contemporary Theology series, David Cunningham calls for a revisioning of Christian living in light of the Trinity. This is not to say that Cunningham is uninterested in doctrine; rather, it is his contention that the doctrine of the Trinity needs to be intimately reconnected to ethics such that trinitarian faith no longer remains remote but ultimately informs *trinitarian* praxis.

Following Wittgenstein, Cunningham's thesis rides on the assumption that "practice gives words their sense"; hence, his desire to critique the traditional language of faith, particularly *Father, Son* and *Holy Spirit*, terms which he imaginatively translates "Source," "Wellspring," and "Living Water." For Cunningham, this rethinking of Biblical and liturgical language is necessary because of the "rhetorical" usage of language, which is concerned with how people "can be moved to action by the written and spoken word" (p. 10). A "rhetorical theology," therefore, needs to be fully aware of not only *what* is said but also *how* what is said is received by the hearer. In other words, doctrine must speak to the present context or the "other" will have been rendered indifferent and obsolete. This is exactly what the individualizing tendencies of the Enlightenment have achieved, and they have not yet been overcome today.

In light of this, it is not surprising to find Cunningham beginning his revision of the doctrine of the Trinity with the *relations* in God as opposed to the *persons*. In fact, the term *persons* has the rhetorical effect of calling to mind three people with three different wills and is therefore improper in this individualistic day and age. Cunningham sees himself in the spirit of Aquinas who rightly understood that it is *relations* that denote the "three whats" in God. This implies that the verbalizing connotations of *relations* remains dominant in the doctrine rather than their substantive misapplication. Although it is understandable that Aquinas would make the move whereby the *relations* of *paternitas, filiatio* and *processio* (which Cunningham translates as "initiation," "fruition," and "issuance") are associated with the substantives *Pater, Filius*, and *Spiritus Sanctus*, Cunningham argues that Aquinas would not have done so if he were aware of the individualizing outcome of such language. This is not entirely convincing, however, since the familial language of God (*paternitas—filiatio*) is important for Aquinas in terms of understanding our own adoption by God as daughters and sons.

Although Cunningham prefers to leave unexplored the "three whats" in God, he nonetheless recognizes the need for naming God substantively. Here again, Cunningham argues that Aquinas would rethink the masculine naming of God if Aquinas were aware of the outdated biological assumptions of his day; namely, that only males were involved in the process of begetting. But Cunningham is suspicious of the alternative naming of God—such as *Mother, Child, Spirit* or *Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier*—just as much as the traditional language. None of these alternatives help us understand any better the fact that God is three *subsistent relations* and not three *persons*. According to Cunningham, these alternative solutions fall into the same individualizing schema.

Thus, the naming of God must somehow reveal the self-differentiation in God and lead us on to the claims this makes upon the Christian life, for it is only in *practice* that these words make any difference. This leads Cunningham into a discussion with Barth concerning the *vestigia trinitatis*. Cunningham argues that rhetoric is indeed such a *vestigium* or "triune mark" in that it is not only the *speaker* and the *argument* that are important but the *audience* as well (contra Barth). From this vantage point, Cunningham addresses some typical questions concerning the doctrine in light of his translation—"Source," "Wellspring," and "Living Water"—and sees such a translation mirroring the needs of a rhetorical theology. Cunningham claims he does not wish to supersede the traditional language but desires instead to see imaginative translations such as his come into relationship *alongside* the already existing language.

For such an event to happen, however, it is necessary to purge our thinking of an analytic "either/or" mentality and start viewing theology as a musical endeavor in which the polyphony of difference is held together in harmony. This means, similarly, that the theological implications of participation become important. Cunningham, however, looks with a wary eye upon the current interest in *perichoresis* as the answer to how three are one in God since, according to him, it tends to be used as the cure-all for the tri-theistic tendencies of some modern theologians. Cunningham prefers *koi-*

*nonia*, given its eucharistic overtones. Here, Cunningham makes a direct connection between how the life of God reflects the participation between God and humanity as well as the relationship among human beings. To *practice* God's life, then, has ecclesial implications. Cunningham argues, however, that the trajectory of his argument does not neglect the "particular" but rather re-envisioning it as "non-individualistic, non-contrastive, and non-exclusionary" (p. 203). Such action also finds precedent in the very life of God in which the *subsistent relations* are indeed particular but still radically equal and accepting of each other, to such an extent that one cannot be thought separated out from the other two.

The final third of Cunningham's book addresses a myriad of current concerns in light of his extended argument in the previous sections. Everything from war and violence to children in church and from homosexuality to the problem of authority is given attention. It remained unclear to me, however, as to how trinitarian praxis influences the argumentation of this section since many if not all of his arguments seem like they could be made without any reference to the Trinity. In fact, Cunningham justifies much of what he says in this section from what appears to be an experiential foundationalist framework. If private, expressive language is allowed to supersede the "code" of communal discernment and dialog found in the Church and Scripture, Cunningham must be asked if his changes in language fit into a meaningful narrative pattern for the community at all. For me, his argument makes much more sense when those very words that he takes out are re-substituted for his substitutions. We certainly cannot be slaves to tradition, but it is from the past that we are given those "clues" that have shaped rhetoric, particularly in literature (e.g. Chaucer), for centuries. Innovation that attempts to side-step this deeply-rooted tradition could be potentially disastrous from an ecumenical perspective, since it is this "code" that Christians of all stripes—Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—participate in to some degree or another.

Cunningham should nonetheless be commended for venturing out into extremely controversial areas that he quite rightly notices have been neglected by those people who should have something to say—namely, the theologians. This book is written intentionally for the student with an elementary knowledge of theology but it will also engage the well-seasoned academic because Cunningham addresses all those who wish to grapple with the question of how one's trinitarian faith interacts with and shapes the rest of one's life.

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*The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence.* By John Sanders. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998, 367 pp., \$21.99 paper.

In this provocative volume, John Sanders, associate professor of philosophy and religion at Huntington College, opts for a "risk model" of divine providence over its "no-risk" alternative. In the latter, objects Sanders, "no event ever happens without God's specifically selecting it to happen" (p. 10). While upholding God's absolute sovereignty, the no-risk view has, for Sanders, at least two implications he finds unacceptable: (1) it can lead to anger and even hatred of God due to his control over and selection of horrible evils; and (2) it precludes real, rigorous, and interactive relationship with God. While there are variations of the risk model (which Sanders also calls "relational theism"), Sanders defends one particular version he labels "presentism" (p. 12). As the name would indicate, it holds that God's knowledge and experience are

a function of all past and present happenings. God, like us, experiences history as it unfolds. He learns what free creatures do when they choose and act. And because of this, God is genuinely interactive in his relationship with us, urging us to follow his leading but not knowing if we will, taking into account our desires and prayers before he makes up his mind about what is best to do, responding to what occurs as free creatures act in ways that God could not have known in advance, and in all this, joining the unfolding of history as a fellow-traveler with us in discovering what the future holds.

If other open theist colleagues can be criticized for scant attention to Biblical teaching in developing their position, Sanders certainly cannot. Of the book's 274 pages of text, a full 101 pages expound OT and NT materials offered to make his case that presentism has "greater fidelity to the biblical story" (p. 19) than the no-risk perspective. More than that, Sanders proposes that his model makes the best cumulative case when one considers all the relevant data from Scripture and experience, applied particularly to issues such as evil, prayer, guidance, and a personal relationship with God.

Due to space constraints, I will focus on a select few of Sanders's positions, representative of the broader contours of his presentist proposal. First, in defense of the notion that God learns what free creatures choose and do at the points in time when they make those decisions and actions, Sanders appeals to Gen 22:10–12. Here, God halts Abraham at the last moment with knife in hand ready to be raised above Isaac's tethered body and says, "Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me." Commenting on this text, Sanders first quotes approvingly Walter Brueggemann, who writes, "God genuinely does not know. . . . The flow of the narrative accomplishes something in the awareness of God. He did not know. Now he knows" (p. 52). Then, Sanders himself explains further:

If the test is genuine for both God and Abraham, then what is the reason for it? The answer is to be found in God's desire to bless all the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:3). God needs to know if Abraham is the sort of person on whom God can count for collaboration toward the fulfillment of the divine project. Will he be faithful? Or must God find someone else through whom to achieve his purpose? God has been faithful; will Abraham be faithful? Will God have to modify his plans with Abraham? In [Gen.] 15:8 Abraham asked God for assurance. Now it is God seeking assurance from Abraham. (pp. 52–53)

For Sanders, clearly this account is illustrative of the fact that God does not know what free creatures will do until they act. Will Abraham obey God? God does not know, but he learns here and now that Abraham will do so. We rob the passage of its natural meaning when we strip from it its simple message contained in God's own words, "For now I know."

What should we think of this argument? One consideration certainly is whether other similar Biblical passages can rightly be interpreted with such a straightforward reading as Sanders insists on for Gen 22:12. Consider, for example, another relevant passage Sanders omits in his lengthy discussion of OT materials. In Genesis 18, three men visit and dine with Abraham. Following their meal and just before leaving for Sodom, "the LORD" speaks to Abraham. Genesis 18:30–21 reads, "And the LORD said, 'The outcry of Sodom and Gomorrah is indeed great, and their sin is exceedingly grave. I will go down now, and see if they have done entirely according to its outcry, which has come to me; and if not, I will know.'" Only a moment's reflection on this text reveals the severe doctrinal implications that would follow were one to employ here Sanders's hermeneutic of Gen 22:12. By God's own admission, first, *he does not presently know* whether the sin of Sodom is as great as its outcry. Second, *he does not know the past sin* of Sodom fully, since he must see if they *have done* accord-

ing to its outcry. Third, *he is not omnipresent*, since he needs to travel there, and only then will he be able to *see* what the status of their sin is; when he arrives and looks, *then* (and only then) he will “know.” Hermeneutical consistency, it would seem, requires that this text and Gen 22:12 be treated alike. So which should it be? Shall we follow Sanders’s approach consistently and deny *even more* of God’s attributes than have already been trimmed away? Or, shall we, with great caution and care, consider whether Scripture elsewhere teaches, with sufficient clarity and fullness, that God in fact knows the past, present, and future and is everywhere present, in order then to reconsider the narrative and personal dialogue form of these Genesis texts (and others) to discern in them their proper and intended meanings?

On a related point, a deeply troubling yet undeniable implication of open theism is that on this view, God may, upon gaining new and additional knowledge, change his assessment of his own actions or beliefs regarding some past situation. That is, since God learns what happens as history unfolds, it is possible that God may learn things that make him reevaluate and reassess *the correctness or wisdom even of his own past actions*. Indeed, Sanders appears honestly to admit this is the case. Consider, for example, his treatment of the flood account. In a nearly breathtaking analysis, John Sanders suggests, for example, that this may be just exactly what God did after discharging his decision to bring a flood upon the whole world. Upon experiencing and learning what he did through seeing the entire human race and animal kingdom killed (save Noah, his family, and the collected animals), God promises never again to send a flood on the whole earth. Why is this so? Sanders writes, “It may be the case that although human evil caused God great pain, the destruction of what he had made caused him even greater suffering. Although his judgment was righteous, God decides to try different courses of action in the future” (p. 50). Here, then, God second-guesses his prior decision. Perhaps this is not after all the best way to deal with deplorable human evil, God reasons. Although just, perhaps this is not best. And given that God promises *never* again to act in this manner, on Sanders’s reading of this account God must have felt very, very badly about what he had done.

Some may dismiss this as Sanders’s peculiar interpretation of this text, one which an open theist would not have to adopt. While true, this nonetheless exposes a conception of God one must be willing to accept in open theism. The harsh reality is that since God learns constantly, is taken by surprise, has his own mistaken beliefs corrected, and faces new relevant information that affects his view of situations, it is altogether reasonable to imagine God as regularly, in fact constantly, reassessing whether his own judgment about a multitude of matters was correct. How much God may be wrong! How much he may plan that he later realizes is not best! How many of his beliefs he must admit have been mistaken! This implication of the open view of God undermines confidence in God’s wisdom, plans, and purposes. Moreover, that this is not an isolated instance is evident by Sanders’s discussion of Exod 3:16–4:9 and Jer 3:7, 19–20 where he writes that these and other texts “leave open the possibility that God might be ‘mistaken’ about some points, as the biblical record acknowledges” (p. 132). So, while Sanders hopes to persuade his readers that presentism offers a God more responsive to the human condition, we find a God of whose own responses he may need later to repent once he learns that his leading or promise in fact may not be best.

There is so much more with which Sanders deals than can be evaluated in such a short review. His treatments of divine sovereignty, the problem of evil, the forms and fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, the nature of divine guidance and prayer in the Christian life all deserve careful reflection. In the end, however, evangelicals must accept or reject this proposal on the basis of clear Biblical teaching, and it is on this basis that I strongly urge open theism’s rejection. When God himself defines the credibility of his own claim to deity on the basis of his knowledge and prediction of the future, and

when God charges idols as false gods precisely because they do not know and cannot predict the future (see e.g. Isa 41:21–24), we must reject this proposal that denies exhaustive divine foreknowledge and by so doing denies God the self-chosen basis for his claim to deity. For the sake of fidelity to Scripture, for the sake of the strength and well-being of the church, and for the sake of the undiminished glory of God, Sanders's presentism must not be accepted within evangelicalism.

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*Christian Spirituality: An Introduction.* By Alister E. McGrath. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999, x + 202 pp., \$26.95 paper.

Few areas of religious appeal are expanding today as rapidly as the subject of spirituality. The diversity of published books alone witnesses to the wide scope of interest, ranging from serious investigation into the spirituality of various world religious traditions to spiritual handbooks and do-it-yourself manuals. In this flourishing religious marketplace a need exists for a thoughtful and discriminating explanation of the nature of Christian spirituality. Alister McGrath's book fits this need admirably.

While several introductory books on Christian spirituality can be found on my bookshelf, McGrath's book is, in my opinion, superior to them all. The reasons for my conclusion are several. First, he offers the reader a comprehensive introduction without interjecting, at least obviously, his own preconceptions and without neglecting the broad perimeters Christian spirituality occupies.

Second, the book is exceptionally reader-friendly. Its organizational formatting enhances communication and facilitates learning by blocking off for emphasis definitions of key terms and numerically summarizing important explanations and arguments. In addition, the writing style is marked by extraordinary clarity, avoiding technical jargon and carefully defining special terms when they are unavoidable.

Third, the content of the book is significantly inclusive. After defining spirituality generally and Christian spirituality specifically, McGrath clarifies the meaning and relationship between mysticism and spirituality. Following these clarifications, he introduces the reader to the three fundamental expressions of Christian spirituality—Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant—concluding with an examination of the premise that the basic beliefs of an individual and a community have a profound impact in the formulation of one's spiritual perspective. In this context McGrath also explores the attitude a tradition possesses toward the world, culture, and history as being equally consequential in giving content to a spiritual outlook.

A major section of the book centers on theological-Biblical foundations of Christian spirituality. After discussing the negative and positive relationship between spirituality and theology, McGrath presents seven areas of Christian theology (creation, Trinity, incarnation, etc.) that form the theological substructure of Christian spirituality and "illustrate the manner in which theology and spirituality interact" (p. 35). The doctrine of the Trinity, for example, exerts an impact on Christian spirituality in that it "gathers together the richness of the complex Christian understanding of God, to yield a vision of God to which the only appropriate response is adoration and devotion" (p. 52). McGrath continues the foundational overview by exposing the reader to the Biblical images employed in Christian spirituality (feast, journey, exile, desert, etc.) integrated with the issues and complexities associated with visualizing and encountering God. The book concludes with practical guidance and directive questions to assist the reader in

engaging brief extracts of some selected writings in Christian spirituality, an excellent feature for acquiring insight into the nature of Christian spirituality.

While it is easier to critique a book than to write one, I find little in this text to dislike. Its formatting and organizational structure are superbly done. Moreover, the book maintains a balanced treatment of the three Christian perspectives, allowing each to have a voice without minimizing the contributions of the other. Moreover, the excellent discussion of Biblical images within the context of the Bible as a resource for spirituality represents an area frequently neglected and provides a welcomed feature of the book.

While some may quarrel with specific definitions or arguments advanced—none of which are, in my opinion, inadequate—a personal concern, nevertheless, persists; namely, the lack of an extended discussion of the spirit, both human and divine—an emphasis central to the Biblical perspective on Christian spirituality. So pivotal to Christian spirituality is the interconnectedness between the two that apart from the human spirit the Holy Spirit is intrinsically unknowable. Conversely, it is James Loder's position that the human spirit apart from the Holy Spirit vitalizes and empowers human perversity. Both of these are essential notions to the theological explication of Christian spirituality. Moreover, McGrath's overall approach seems bound within the contours of the classical contemplative tradition. Thus he limits discussion of some distinctives of Protestant spiritual theology such as the death and resurrection of Christ, not simply as a *Christus Victor* motif but as transference from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light and the theological foundation for the ultimate realization of union with God. In fairness, however, McGrath is presenting an overview of Christian spirituality and not advancing a specific Christian interpretation. Therefore these personal concerns do not negate my wholehearted recommendation of the book as an outstanding introduction to Christian spirituality.

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*A Basic Guide to Eschatology: Making Sense of the Millennium.* By Millard J. Erickson. Minneapolis: Baker, 1998, 197 pp., \$12.99 paper.

With the coming of a new millennium, many writers have capitalized on the "millennial madness" that is sweeping our world by writing books on the dark and foreboding aspects of the new millennium (e.g. Y2K). Fortunately, this is not one of those kinds of books. Instead, Millard J. Erickson, Distinguished Professor of Theology at Baylor University and Western Seminary (Portland), has sought to provide readers with an introduction to the various voices of the last two hundred years in the study of eschatology. This book is actually a second edition of his *Contemporary Options in Eschatology* originally published in 1977. However, this book contains some updated bibliographical references, most notably in the discussion of dispensationalism, in which Erickson discusses so-called progressive dispensationalists like Craig Blaising, Darrell Bock, and Robert Saucy in light of traditional dispensationalist understandings.

This short overview of eschatology discusses various voices in this much-debated area of theology from foundational themes of theologians like Schweitzer and Bultmann to current views. As is characteristic of most of Erickson's works, he guides the reader through a diverse maze of authors and positions with clarity and brevity while accurately capturing the spirit of the view he is addressing. By doing so, he provides even

those whose views stand in opposition to his own with a strong background and clear arguments for their position.

His three-part division into background issues, millennial views, and tribulational positions provides a functional model for discussing many views in a few pages. Each view discussed contains a series of positive and negative critiques from the author based upon a Scriptural and systematic approach to eschatology. He honestly defines and critiques all the views, even the ones with which he seems to agree (in his conclusion on p. 183, Erickson states that posttribulational premillennialism seems to be the most adequate position to him), in order to give the reader a fair and accurate understanding of the positions discussed. Erickson does not directly address such personal eschatological issues as hell, heaven, or the intermediate state; rather, he limits his discussion to a systematic overview of global eschatological positions.

Erickson's bibliography is somewhat dated in places, with the exception of his discussion of recent trends in dispensationalism. Noticeably absent are post-1980 works such as Anthony Hoekema's articulate defense of amillennialism (*The Bible and the Future*) and Adrio König's discussion regarding the *Eclipse of Christ in Eschatology*. However, these omissions do not detract from the overall usefulness of this introduction to students, pastors, and teachers of theology. Newcomers to eschatology will likely find the first section of the book (background views) the most difficult and time-consuming to work through. However, Erickson's expertise and straightforward approach to such a diverse group of foundational scholars as Schweitzer, Dodd, Bultmann, and Moltmann make this section and the entire book well worth one's time.

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*Yet Will I Trust Him: Understanding God in a Suffering World.* By John Mark Hicks. Joplin: College Press, 1999, 338 pp., \$19.99 paper.

Traditional yet fresh! That is how I would characterize Hicks's treatment of the intellectual problem of evil and suffering for Christian theists. The freshness comes from the fact that he is no casual observer or purely philosophical theologian. His marriage plans for career missions were cut short when his youthful companion developed a blood clot after minor surgery and to his shock died. Their prayers for health and protection seemingly went unheard. Time passed and love came again. From the new marriage came three children and the issues of divine providence in some ways seemed less threatening. Then Hicks's only son was diagnosed with a genetic disorder from which there is no escape and which leads to a humiliating physical regression and a lingering death. "Lord, who sinned," we ask, "that such grief would come into the life of this devout theologian?"

Hicks asks all the questions a human mind would ask, but his remarkable search for answers results in a Biblical theology. Job, notes Hicks, attributes everything to God while yet maintaining that his (Job's) suffering is undeserved. Non-theistic worldviews have no answer, but the Biblical story does. Hicks reviews the Biblical materials for the original Fall, taking the story literally but surprisingly claiming that Adam's sin ultimately was his choice to follow Eve rather than God. Hicks concludes that God took the risk of creating free will—and thus the possibility of sin—in order to magnify his glory and share his love—though neither were necessary for God. The story of Job tells us just how much suffering—even innocent suffering—God will permit in this created world. Job chooses God over family or personal comfort, even when he gets no intellectual answers to why God has allowed the many tragedies to come into his life. Hicks

concludes that God permits Satanic freedom and natural disasters just as he permits human freedom because he seeks genuine fellowship, not manipulated love. He uses our suffering to punish sin and refine our faith, to turn us away from seeking selfish happiness, to discipline and educate us spiritually, and in fact to redeem us. I thought it was interesting to consider Hicks's comment—that the ungodly stop praying when distress comes but believers cry out to God—as another aspect of why suffering is allowed by God.

In Chapter 7 Hicks summarizes the extensive lament and complaint content of the psalms. He assumes the modern critical stance that these are “community” speeches and thus serve a generic purpose in Israel. My own view is that they were used by the community due to the typical nature of the personal experience that led an author to pen those words. Thus in many details I could not follow Hicks's arguments, but in the end I can agree with many of his applications. I don't agree that theodicy is rooted in human arrogance.

In a particularly helpful chapter, Hicks analyzes three instances of God's sovereignty in the death of a child: Job's children, David and Bathsheba's first child, and Jeroboam's son. I think I would have included the daughter of Jairus and the son of the widow of Nain. Even so, it is a touching chapter given what Hicks is facing with his own son.

In the closing chapters Hicks addresses the ultimate solution: the atonement and the eternal state in which justice will finally be realized. Hicks wisely counsels that our “interpretation of suffering” is not the proper conversation in the funeral home parlor. The interpretation, he suggests, is at that moment best left to the suffering ones who will with spiritual hindsight find their way.

This is a readable and exegetically responsible work. As a handout for sufferers it is too long, but as a personalized summary of Biblical affirmations on suffering for those who wish to be ministers or for those who are (in hindsight) searching for answers, this book receives my recommendation.

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*When a Baby Dies: Answers to Comfort Grieving Parents.* By Ronald H. Nash. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1999, 120 pp., \$9.99 paper.

Every person engaged in local church ministry or simply involved in the reality of human experience eventually runs into circumstances where theology crashes into real life. An infant's death is just such an event. In the book *When a Baby Dies*, Ronald Nash confronts a difficult but overwhelmingly practical question: What happens to infants when they die? The purpose of the book is to provide comfort and hope for parents grieving the loss of a child.

In the first four chapters, Nash refutes what he calls “wrong approaches to the question of infant salvation.” These approaches are Pelagianism, universalism, post-mortem salvation, and baptismal regeneration. In each case, Nash clearly and briefly points out how these theories contradict Scripture and the historic faith of the Church and offer no true hope to grieving parents. Curiously, in the midst of very solid content, Nash includes a running caricature of a liberal minister and barbs toward liberalism, both of which are unnecessary. Nash could have communicated the same content without polarizing the discussion and needlessly alienating potential readers.

In chapter five, Nash sets forth his own position regarding infant salvation: “All children who die in infancy and all mentally handicapped persons whose intellectual

and moral judgment cannot surpass that of children are saved" (p. 59). In the course of demonstrating his position, however, Nash contradicts himself and draws unfounded conclusions from several passages of Scripture. He begins the chapter by saying, "No theory of infant salvation can be biblically sound if it ignores the way original sin leaves all humans including infants and the mentally handicapped both guilty and depraved" (p. 59). Yet in his first argument he contradicts this statement saying that infants "are not moral agents" (p. 60) and arguing that people are only condemned for sins committed in the body (pp. 60–64). This seems to ignore the way original sin leaves infants guilty and *by nature* objects of wrath. Next, Nash uses Jeremiah and John the Baptist as examples of "regenerate infants" (p. 64), and he presents Jesus' treatment of children to support his thesis that all infants are saved. Yet, in each case, the conclusions drawn are not the necessary or even likely results of exegesis.

Chapters six and seven compare the Arminian and Calvinist approaches to infant salvation. Nash rejects Arminianism because it provides no ground for the doctrine of infant salvation (p. 85). He affirms the Reformed approach, arguing that "deceased infants and the mentally handicapped are saved because God elected them, Christ redeemed them, and the Holy Spirit regenerated them" (p. 100). The final chapter seeks to answer questions such as "Will we know each other in heaven?" and "Will infants still be infants in heaven?" It also addresses the question of prenatal death.

Admirably, through this book, Nash seeks to offer hope to grieving parents who have lost their children to untimely death. He deals with a tremendously practical ministry issue in an easily readable fashion. Unfortunately, his conclusions are dependent more on Reformed theology than on solid exegesis of Biblical texts. Bringing hope to grieving parents is critical to the role of pastors and indeed to all who are engaged in the reality of human existence. Yet parents, pastors, and others will have to look elsewhere to find hope that is solidly demonstrated from Scripture.

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*The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform.* By Roger E. Olson. Downers Grove; InterVarsity, 1999, 652 pp., \$34.99.

With the growing loss of interest in the history of the Church and its doctrines, it is refreshing to receive a new overview of the history of Christian thought written from an evangelical perspective. Roger Olson has presented us with a clearly written and helpful introduction to the subject and states its limitations. Briefer than Pelikan's or Harnack's multi-volume works, it is more detailed than other one-volume handbooks. Like many textbooks, it grows out of his experience of teaching the subject on the undergraduate level. It is suitable as a textbook in such a course and, with certain supplementations, in a seminary-level survey course. Written clearly and with a minimum of analytical complexity, it will also serve as an excellent introduction for non-specialists.

A unique feature of this volume, as compared with earlier historical theologies, is Olson's intention of treating the subject as an unfolding story. A major benefit of this approach is that the history flows as a connected account, rather than choppy and isolated units. After a brief introduction, in which he states some of his presuppositions, Olson traces in nine parts and 35 chapters the entire history from the earliest critics to the contemporary period.

Olson gives indication of having worked through the primary sources in each period. The pedigree of the book in undergraduate lectures can be seen in his relating ancient movements such as Gnosticism and Arianism to contemporary reappearances such as

New Age and Jehovah's Witnesses. He commendably includes some movements, such as the Anabaptists and Arminianism, that sometimes get slight if any treatment in histories of Christian thought. He is aware of the charge that such history is simply the story of dead white males, but counters that some such as Athanasius were black and that opportunities to do theology were simply not available to women in the early period.

Olson's explanations of doctrines and historical developments are clear and generally well developed. He takes note of differing interpretations that have been given of these. He frequently offers illustrations to give lucidity to complex ideas. His employment of anecdotes is interesting. He calls "probably apocryphal" (p. 165) one for which there is some historical documentation, then feels free to embellish it with his own details. He takes pains to refute a caricature of a familiar story (pp. 20–21). On page 15, he declares irrelevant to his point the truth of a legend that the bishops at Constantinople during the Saracen invasion were discussing the number of angels that could dance on the head of a pin. Whether there is evidence that this topic was debated on that occasion (or, we might add, on any other), Olson uses it nonetheless.

The major virtues are those that I have described: continuity, clarity, reliance upon primary sources, reliability, and fairness of treatment. Typographical errors are at a minimum, although German purists will flinch at the spelling of Barth's early treatise on Romans as *Romerbrief*, rather than *Römerbrief* or the transliteration *Roemerbrief*. Important notes are placed following the final chapter. The index is thorough and useful, although the references are sometimes off by one page. The bibliographical suggestions are helpful, but one would hope that a contemporary book would mention non-print editions of the Fathers (e.g. [www.ageslibrary.com](http://www.ageslibrary.com)).

While generally recommending this text for the uses mentioned above, certain reservations need noting. These relate primarily to the allocation of space among subjects. Some traditions will question covering the 900 years from Gregory to Luther in 80 pages in a book of this size. In his desire to give all sides, Olson commendably includes Anabaptists and Arminians, but it is questionable whether the former have had a theological impact equal to that of Calvin and Zwingli, which the similar length of chapters would suggest. In the twentieth century, he devotes an entire chapter to Barth and neo-orthodoxy yet never mentions Bultmann and demythologization, and the only mention of Tillich is a one-sentence comparison to Clement (p. 85).

Most disappointing is his concluding chapter. One finds there no mention of post-modern, postliberal, narrative, or religiously pluralistic theology. Gustavo Gutierrez, James Cone, and Rosemary Ruether are given one paragraph each and must alone speak for Latin American, Black, and feminist theologies, obscuring the complexities of these movements. Although Olson speaks of the future influence of third-world theologians (p. 612), one gets the impression that there have not yet been any significant African or Asian theologians.

This will serve as a useful introduction to Christian thought, especially if supplemented at the points indicated.

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*Martin Luther: Learning for Life.* By Marilyn J. Harran. St. Louis: Concordia, 1997, 284 pp.

Comparing the change in the spread of communication between the age of the printing press in the sixteenth century to the age of the information highway today, Marilyn Harran presents a fresh approach to Luther on education. She seeks to discover Luther's approach to pedagogy to prepare both laypeople and clergy to advance

the community of the faithful. She also asks what lessons we can learn from Luther in our age of secular education.

There have certainly been numerous works on the subject of Luther and education published over the last few years, most notably Strauss's *Luther's House of Learning*. Harran claims that the shortcomings of these works is that they do not focus on Luther's own education and the role that it played in shaping his views on the subject. Harran hopes to fill this void with the present work. The author treads over well-worn ground, relying heavily on key secondary sources, especially those of Heiko Oberman and Martin Brecht.

In the first generation of the Reformation, Luther faced the unique challenge of structuring a system of religious education for children while also having to instruct their parents and even grandparents in the rudiments of evangelical theology. He also was a professor at the fledgling University of Wittenberg and played a decisive role in its curricular reforms. Harran argues that the university was an essential element of the Reformation and that Luther and Melanchthon used the best teaching methods that were available to them, the ones that they had learned from both their humanist and scholastic teachers.

For Luther, the education of youth was an essential element to prepare for the future of the Reformation. Luther advocated that all children should receive at least a rudimentary form of instruction. Boys typically attended primary school for one to two hours a day and girls for only one hour. The Bible and the catechism were essential aspects of such a system both for children and for adults. These texts should also be studied at home so as to involve the entire family. Harran notes that Luther's use of the catechism was not an innovation but was used by the medieval church in the context of preparation for penance. The dialogue format provided a better interaction with Biblical teachings and showed that the student was really gaining a measure of understanding.

The author also points out the role that Luther's direct study of the Bible played for his rejection of many aspects of late-medieval nominalism. On the other hand, Luther was not a complete advocate of humanism. He always maintained the idea that education would never be able to totally transform the individual who was corrupted by sin. Education for Luther helped the believer to be better prepared for service to others.

Luther argued for a more comprehensive form of education based, in part, on the fact that his own breakthrough came as a result of intensive study of the Bible. Education is also closely related to one's sense of Christian vocation and service to the world. Harran points out that the revision in the academic curriculum at the University of Wittenberg reflected these values.

The 1527 visitation of the Saxon parishes showed that most parishioners displayed a poor knowledge of even the basic rudiments of Christian teaching. The ensuing reforms coming out of the visitations focused largely on a curriculum for the local schools. Luther stressed grammar as an essential building block for learning. He also believed strongly in inculcating a love of learning through the introduction of both classical and Biblical texts.

I would recommend this text as a readable introduction to Luther's use of education to further the Reformation. While not highly original or adding significant new material to our understanding of the topic, Harran provides a helpful overview in a clear and concise manner.

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*Law and Gospel: Philip Melanchthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Poenitentia.* By Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids: Baker; Carlisle: Paternoster, 1997, 232 pp., \$19.99 paper.

The relationship between law and grace had been a debated issue among theologians throughout the centuries. During the Reformation, this relationship assumed center stage. Luther's Roman Catholic adversaries accused him of advocating antinomianism because of the doctrine of justification by faith and for his alleged moral inconsistencies. Eventually, both the Lutheran and Reformed camps developed an emphasis upon the "third use of the law" whereby the moral law is binding upon the believer. In the early years of the development of Lutheran theology, the debate over the role of the law for the believer was one of the major controversies leading up to the *Formula of Concord*.

Timothy Wengert, one of the world's leading contemporary Melanchthon scholars, has published a fascinating blow-by-blow account of the debate over the issue of antinomianism between Melanchthon and John Agricola of Eisleben, an early advocate of reform who had been one of Luther's early supporters at Wittenberg. Agricola had moved to Eisleben as part of the Lutheran education program to be rector of the Latin school. The debate between Melanchthon and Agricola centered on the relationship between *poenitentia* and the law. Wengert prefers to use the Latin *poenitentia* rather than its English equivalent of *repentance* or *penance*. *Poenitentia* had been a key term in the Reformation going all the way back to Luther's posting of the *Ninety-Five Theses* in 1517 where Luther used it in the first four theses.

The debate between Melanchthon and Agricola erupted in 1527. However, as early as 1525, in his *In Evangelium Lucae Annotationes*, Agricola expressed his aversion to a place for the law in the life of the Christian. God gave the law to Moses to uncover the blindness of sin resulting from the Fall. *Poenitentia* is entirely God's work in us, he argued, dismissing the typical medieval divisions of it into parts such as contrition, confession, and satisfaction as leading to human works. According to Agricola, one cannot judge true believers by their level of virtue. *Poenitentia* is totally the work of the gospel and has nothing to do with the law. Agricola removed *poenitentia* from the domain of the Roman Catholic sacramental system, making it the result of the promise of Christ for salvation.

Wengert highlights the importance of the substantial number of catechisms that Lutheran reformers published between 1525 and 1527 for educating the Lutheran laity. Melanchthon and Agricola's own catechisms provided them with the opportunity to expand on their theology of *poenitentia*. It also brought the debate to public attention as the audience for catechisms was obviously much wider than that of Biblical commentaries. Melanchthon's 1527 catechism highlighted the importance of the law in leading the believer to faith. Fear is the necessary precursor to faith. The moral law is not just written on tablets of stone, but is also written on the human heart. This is why Christ cited the Decalogue in Matthew 5.

Wengert's chapter on the third use of the law is of particular interest. Melanchthon's third edition of the *Scholia* on the book of Colossians marked his introduction of the third use of the law. Wengert asserts that this treatise is important in noting an increased importance of good works in contrast to the previous edition published in 1528. In his comments on Col 2:7, Melanchthon added three pages of material in which he asserted that "the righteousness of a good conscience or of good works ought to accompany faith." Although the believer does not obey in a perfect manner, these works are pleasing to God because one performs them in faith. Melanchthon was obviously attempting to bridge the gap between antinomianism and semi-Pelagianism.

The third use of the law was built upon Luther's twofold usage. Luther never saw a need for it for believers; the charge of antinomianism necessitated this discussion. Wengert dismisses the belief that Luther himself advocated three uses of the law, arguing that the third usage is more of a reflection of later Lutheran controversies culminating in the formal definition in the *Formula of Concord*. However, Melancthon was clearly moving in the direction of a third use for the law by 1527. Wengert credits the debate with Agricola as well as negotiations with the Roman Catholics for Melancthon's emphasis on it.

Wengert's detailed analysis of this debate provides valuable insights into the early development of an important aspect of Lutheran theology and builds upon the work of Robert Kolb on the subject. This book is well documented and includes a helpful index and bibliography. For those interested in the transition between the first and second generation of the Reformation, this book should be required reading.

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*The Protestant Face of Anglicanism*. By Paul F. M. Zahl. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 120 pp., \$11.00.

The author of this book is the dean of the Cathedral Church of the Advent (Episcopal) in Birmingham, Alabama. He argues convincingly that Anglicanism rests historically within the Protestant and Reformed tradition of Christianity, admitting that it has often appeared more Apostolic and Catholic. This two-sided face of the church stems from the period of Queen Elizabeth I and remains still today. The main issue the author wishes to resolve is whether Anglicanism presents an antithesis between these two views or a synthesis, a *via media* or "third way." He believes the third way approach sells short the Anglican church, despite the fact that it is the prevailing view of many defining it today.

The English Reformation (like the European) was a change in religious conviction based on the affirmation that justification is by grace through faith. Like Luther, the early English reformers held that the believer was able to love God freely because one was declared righteous and forgiven by God's decree. The English Reformation was more than a change of form from papal to monarchical; it was one also of substance, lasting one hundred seventy years (1520–1690). It resulted in a Protestant Reformed church and nation.

Why then is Anglicanism today not squarely identified with Protestantism but instead as a church of the *via media*? The author provides six reasons: (1) the difficulty of distinguishing Puritan dissent from Protestant Anglican self-understanding; (2) the fear of being labeled a Calvinist despite the Calvinistic tone of many of the *Thirty-nine Articles*; (3) the charge that Protestantism is inflexible, intolerable, too systematic, self-righteous, and moralizing; (4) a popular belief that Anglicanism should be accommodating, unwilling to confront contradiction, and always seeking a "golden mean"; (5) a Catholicizing preference that emphasizes the incarnation over the atonement; and (6) the charge that Protestantism secularizes while Catholicism provides "real" religion. All of these objections leave the Anglican church more with praxis than principle. In addition, the *Prayer Book* has undergone so many revisions that one cannot turn to it today to settle the issues.

Zahl traces for us the period of Anglican history from 1688 to the present. He deals with Wesley and the anti-Calvinistic evangelicals of the eighteenth century, the Anglo-Catholics and the Oxford Movement of the nineteenth century, and the 1928 *English*

*Prayer Book* debate. Since their defeat in 1928, the evangelicals have lost ground, and so has the Protestant face of the Church of England. Three dates mark the progress of evangelical Anglicans in the modern period: the 1956 London Billy Graham Crusade; the first National Evangelical Anglican Conference spurred by the leadership of John Stott in 1967; and the appointment of George Carey as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1991. Today, evangelicals still have a "place at the table." Yet there is a threat of their splitting apart: the open evangelicals are redefining moral questions, the Reformed are struggling to retain traditional views, and the charismatic movement is gaining power and influence. Only the Reformed group feels comfortable with the Protestant profile. Yet among the evangelicals as a whole, there is still an emphasis on the Word, personal faith, the cross and resurrection, doctrine, and the presence of a living God.

In the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA), Protestants are in the minority. But this was not always so, as Zahl traces for us the history of the church in early America from its colonial beginnings to the latter part of the nineteenth century. The defining date of change was 1873 when the "Cummins schism" took place and many younger evangelicals left the church due to a rift with Anglo-Catholics in order to begin the Reformed Episcopal Church. The future now rests with "liberal Anglo-Catholicism." After the 1928 American revision of the *Prayer Book*, some stability set in. For three Sundays out of four in the month, the morning prayer was the main service. But this changed in 1979 with the advent of a new *Prayer Book*, where the communion service became the only authentic service for the church. Thus came the end of Protestant churchmanship in the ECUSA, and one now looks to England and worldwide Anglicanism for a more thoroughgoing Protestant emphasis.

For a short book, this one covers much material and does a fine job of evaluating many important issues of which only a few are touched on here. Zahl is convinced that a thoroughgoing evangelical, Protestant, and Reformed theology can heal the ills which are troubling Anglicanism today. Two appendixes finish out the book for us: the first lists the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Anglican Church, and the second is a sermon Zahl preached August 24, 1997 at Canterbury Cathedral.

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*Barth's Moral Theology: Human Action in Barth's Thought.* By John Webster. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark and Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, x + 223 pp., \$30.00.

One must ask why Karl Barth's enormous output has generated relatively little inquiry into the field of ethics. Considering the comprehensive nature of his major theological statements, it might come as a surprise that so little reflection on the moral implications of his system can be found. This is why John Webster's collection of essays, a follow-up volume to his *Barth's Ethics of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), is so welcome. It is the author's conviction that not only is Barth's moral theology neglected but that without a full understanding of his ethics, his basic work cannot be properly grasped. His thesis is that ethical concerns have been present in Barth's material all along. Against the conventional wisdom that says Barth's interest in human action is only addressed in his later works, notably in the *Church Dogmatics* and especially in the sections on "Reconciliation," Webster finds a good deal of continuity in his output from the earliest writings to the recent ones.

These essays are largely based on either the major posthumous texts given to moral theology or the ethics set forth in the *Church Dogmatics* from beginning to end.

Webster looks at material from the 1920s as well as some more recent texts. He examines not only the specific studies of ethics done by Barth but also his lectures on Luther and Calvin. He also looks at the legacy of Barth and explores in particular the work of Eberhard Jüngel. It is expository analysis at its best. Webster presents a careful explication of Barth's texts, making only rare and sparse judgments of his own. Instead of being dry, these essays are thoughtful, patient scrutinies of the material, marshaled in the end to prove his conviction about the omnipresence of ethical concerns in Barth's work.

The challenge of writing about Barth's moral theology is obvious to anyone familiar with the major themes of this twentieth-century giant. His work was born of the conviction that liberalism had horizontalized the gospel. Any attempt to focus on human action is fraught with the danger of losing the great power and transcendence of revelation. Any emphasis on human freedom always carries with it a threat to God's freedom. Today's consciousness of moral selfhood, of "desire which creates the desirable" (Simone de Beauvoir), would be quite foreign to Barth. To be properly faithful to God's sovereignty, ethical thinking must always be founded in the doctrine of God. If this is so, how then can there be any significant reflection on the human side, on the application, the historical aspect of theology?

Barth, understood through Webster (correctly, I believe), gives an answer that is ultimately frustrating. He is so anxious to safeguard the sovereignty of God that he refuses to adopt any kind of ethical scheme that might translate into permanent, humanly-formulated norms: "The 'Christianness' of Christian ethics is not an observable, natural state of affairs, a modality of religious consciousness, or an attribute which theology can acquire and return by adhering to certain principles or adopting certain methods" (p. 47). Though Barth is opposed to any kind of determinism and to "divine sole causality," God's action in Jesus Christ is so powerful that human responsibility cannot be categorized or formulated. The best we can do in ethics is to understand that the moral field is "a diverse pattern of correspondences or analogies, of similarities and dissimilarities, between the actions of God and human actions" (p. 177).

One of the most interesting essays is the chapter entitled "The Firmest Grasp of the Real: Barth on Original Sin." Webster notes that while the *Church Dogmatics* contain very little on the notion of inherited sin, there is a great deal of material on sin itself. It is to be understood Christologically, that is, in the light of Christ's presence dispelling every illusion of human moral integrity. As is well known, sin is defined as *Nichtige* or "nothingness." It is an absurd act, having no independent identity. Aware of the danger of calling evil an illusion, Barth affirms that it is all too real. It is the "impossible possibility." But it cannot be inherited, because that, in his judgment, would remove it from personal responsibility. In fact, it is better to understand the account of Adam's fall as saga, not history, so that we cannot blame a forefather for what is of our own doing. This curiously voluntarist view of sin puts Barth close to the Arminian perspective. He tries to qualify what could be pure Pelagianism with the idea that though individuals commit sins, they do it together with others. He also maintains that there are structures of evil that can be discovered by sinners. Yet he is most anxious to keep the deliberate choice of the human agent in the forefront. In so doing, he only gives part of the doctrine of hamartiology its due. As a result, he cannot find a reasonable way to account for the curse of God on the world and the radical affliction and misery caused by sin.

Ultimately, as Webster's book clearly shows, Barth's ethics is rather abstract. In his dialectical theology he shies away from any permanent, concrete norms that could be construed as substituting for the transcendent revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The subjects of these essays are items such as freedom or eschatology, but not actual ethical concerns in the real world. Even when Barth comments, as he does extensively, on *loci*

such as calling, work, politics, etc., much of the discussion is purely conceptual (in his view theological), jealous to make distinctions meant to protect the “sheer necessity” of God from human pollution. In emphasizing that the state is not the Church, for example, Barth maintains the Church has a prophetic voice that it could not have were it confused with political power. This is unobjectionable, but when we look for specific pronouncements from the Church about the state, we find very few. In fact, we look throughout these excellent essays, hoping to find some concrete application of theology to the problems of human action, and come up short. Could it be that the reason Barth’s ethics have been neglected is because there is no identifiable set of moral precepts in his theology to speak of?

That might be an extreme view. Barth was not shy to advocate a particular position with regard to a social issue when it was imperative to do so. We know he was one of the principal architects of the *Barmen Declaration* of 1934, whose text was taken to be in defiance of the Nazi movement. It is curious that Webster does not feature this issue in his studies more than he does. There is extensive treatment of popular nationalism both in books such as *The Only Way: How Can the Germans Be Cured?* (1947) and in various parts of the *Church Dogmatics*. In CD II.ii.26, for example, he links the church’s indifference to Fascist totalitarianism to its accommodation to natural theology. (There is a cheap shot against Kuyper and other conservatives, whom he dismisses for their “extreme naiveté” in accepting the terms of modernity.) A similar discussion occurs in Barth’s critique of capitalism as well as communism in *Against the Stream*. It is not clear why Webster chooses to forego any discussion of these texts. He wants to do basic expository work on certain key books, to be sure. But it is possible to read through these essays and be left with the impression that there can be no concrete application of Barth’s ethics, which is not true. What is closer to the truth is his great reluctance to be pinned down to any permanent ethical norms because they are absolute, originating in God but resonating with his creatures who are the image of God.

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*J. I. Packer: A Biography.* By Alister McGrath. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997, 340 pp., \$19.99.

From Boswell’s benchmark *The Life of Samuel Johnson* in 1791 to the flood of hagiographic works on Washington and Lincoln in the nineteenth century to Randolph Churchill and Martin Gilbert’s monumental, multi-volume *Winston Churchill* in our time, the biography has acquired importance in English literature. Parallel to the general or secular market for biographies is the Christian equivalent. One has only to think of Roland Bainton’s magisterial account of Luther, *Here I Stand*, Arnold Dallimore’s massive treatment of George Whitefield, Lewis Drummond’s impressive story of Spurgeon, or Elisabeth Elliot’s tender telling of her husband’s story in *Shadow of the Almighty* to grasp the vital position that biography occupies for Christianity. Unfortunately, Alister McGrath’s *J. I. Packer: A Biography*, while mostly a valiant effort, is not an instant classic, not a pleasing rendition, and not a masterpiece of the genre. But, as McGrath repeatedly puts it in this volume, more anon.

What McGrath does accomplish in this initial biography of the widely-read and highly influential Packer is to introduce us to this titan among Christian thinkers and writers of the twentieth century. Following the normal scheme, McGrath takes readers from Packer’s birth to his position at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, halting his narrative in 1996. Along the route, McGrath emphasizes Packer’s roles as

teacher, Anglican churchman, and writer, with the latter receiving the lion's share of comment and explanation.

A summary of James Innell Packer's life, as drawn from this biography, is simple. "Packer's early years were uneventful" (p. 3). Maturing, he went to university, performed very well academically, and "about 100 feet from where the great evangelist George Whitefield committed himself to Christ in 1735, James I. Packer made his own personal commitment" (p. 18). From this critical juncture, McGrath weaves a long, and usually complex, account of his subject's involvement with Christian institutions of higher education—all Anglican in nature, as is Packer himself, with the exception of Regent College in Vancouver—and the intricacies of evangelical theology in this century and from earlier times. Also, McGrath does not fear commencing and commenting on the controversial. Again and again he delves into the relationships that Packer had with colleagues (for example, the chaos surrounding the formation of Trinity College in Bristol, England; pp. 170–179), others outside his own denomination (such as Dr. David Martyn Lloyd-Jones) but within evangelicalism, and of course, and perhaps of greatest importance, his many, many writings on theological topics and issues, frequently at loggerheads with the *Zeitgeist*.

McGrath concurs with the assessment that Packer has made his greatest impact on Christianity through writing. Beginning with "*Fundamentalism*" and *the Word of God* (1958)—Packer's first book—and proceeding to such classics as *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God* (1961), *Knowing God* (1973), and *Beyond the Battle for the Bible* (1980), McGrath treads carefully in highlighting, underscoring, and expounding Packer's various themes and concerns. He also reminds us that Packer has written smaller pieces for very specific needs within, perhaps, unique circumstances.

Much of Packer's early writing is occasional, written in specific response to the pressing needs of the moment. This is in no way to suggest that it lacks longer-term relevance; it is simply to note that Packer was sensitive to the importance of issues which need to be addressed. (p. 80)

So it has been, whether in great conflicts or small, in his own denomination or outside, in theological disputes on a major theme or on an obscure one, and all in service to God. McGrath trumpets and parades the Packer who has written with trenchant purpose, compact prose, abundant wisdom and insight, and unyielding, unbending orthodoxy. In this sense *J. I. Packer* accomplishes much, scaling certain heights, opening more than a few vistas, and giving readers a fairly full and rounded theological dimension to its subject as gifted writer and thinker.

But for McGrath's accomplishments herein, displaying Packer and his theological talents, this book is uneven, at best, and actually poor in some respects. These problems divide into two general areas: (1) McGrath's writing, and attendant editing points, and (2) omissions.

Basically, *J. I. Packer* is a disappointing book. Unless one can say that J. I. Packer as a person *is* his theology, then the man emerges as a spectre in McGrath's account. For example, in a well-written section titled "The Importance of Tradition for Evangelicals" (pp. 248–255), McGrath presents a solid summary of this subject and how it relates to Packer, but this is a scholastic briefing *not* precisely germane to Packer. In other words, McGrath writes knowledgeably about theology and Packer's interplay with a given topic but does not probe his subject as a human being. It is as if Packer is always being presented exclusively in strict theology. We know about Packer's theological position on this or that item, but what emerges appears cold and formal. Also, in this vein, McGrath is methodically ham-handed in providing background information. An illustration of this is his setting the scene for the recent evangelical-Catholic dialogues. To tell us some of what Packer's involvement has been in this controversial development,

McGrath spends six pages (pp. 264–270) preparing the reader for Packer to enter. And earlier, McGrath trots forward mind-numbing minutiae on Tyndale Hall in Bristol (pp. 140–148). Instead of subtitling this work *A Biography*, maybe *A Theological Appreciation* would have improved this reviewer's understanding.

And there are small niggles, compositional mosquitoes, darting throughout the book. In places either McGrath or his editors fail. On page 78 he refers to a "serious crisis" for Packer. What other kinds of crisis can one have besides a serious one? On page 131 McGrath commences a parenthetical statement and never closes it. At the beginning of page 46 he recapitulates what has been stated immediately before at the conclusion of page 45. And, in a major nag, McGrath annoyingly concludes chapters with cloying, neo-Victorian transitional sentences such as "We must now tell how Packer's life took on a new direction and meaning" (p. 12); "In the next chapter we shall explore the beginnings of Packer's call to minister and teach" (p. 28); and, "He lifted his phone, and placed an international call" (p. 222). No doubt McGrath meant these enticing "cliffhangers" as transitions, but they remind one of cheap advertisements for the next installment of rank television.

Lastly, some items are clearly omitted from this biography. Packer's adopted children are mentioned once (p. 69), never to reappear. Packer's wife, Kit, *née* Mullett, is also given laconic treatment, listed in the index for their initial meeting and marriage but not for their move to Canada. Similarly, the Southern Baptist leader Richard Land is considered in the text but not in the index. Additionally, there is little here about Packer's relationships with students, other than old memories from the 1950s. Apparently, he is an extremely organized lecturer and pleasant person as a teacher, but this volume is devoid of student appreciations for the most part. This creates—and it may well be an illusion—the notion of distance and stiffness on Packer's part vis-à-vis students.

One comes away from this biography like a hungry man yanked from the dining table, wanting more. What is here is good, but one certainly suspects that there is something lacking, particularly in the way of "flesh and bones." *J. I. Packer: A Biography* is an arid work, competent as an introduction, surely, but not a complete picture, if one can even be drawn of anyone. Still, it is what we have to serve the legions of Packer admirers until a more thorough product comes along. So, we must see this effort as the first biography of Packer, but, one would hope, not the final one.

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*Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous.* By W. Jay Wood. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998, 192 pp., \$12.99.

W. Jay Wood, associate professor of philosophy at Wheaton College, has written a revised edition of a basic epistemology text in the fine IVP series *Contours of Christian Philosophy*. The approach taken by Professor Wood is generally called virtue epistemology, which is "a class of theories that analyze fundamental epistemic concepts such as justification or knowledge in terms of properties of persons rather than properties of belief" (Linda Zagzebski, "Virtue Epistemology," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [ed. Edward Craig; New York: Routledge, 1998] 9:617). Rejecting the traditional approach to epistemology, which handles epistemological issues from a position of skepticism, Wood believes that a virtue approach is superior since it is "based on the kind of persons we are and are becoming" (p. 8). The effect of the virtue approach is to place the framework of our belief structures within the nature of the person instead of a hypothetical and antiseptic view of beliefs isolated from their context (p. 76).

While Wood divides his text into eight chapters, for our limited purposes we will focus on its three major divisions. The first division (three chapters) is an introduction of virtue epistemology and its relevance to issues of knowledge. The second division is a standard discussion of how we acquire knowledge (foundationalism and justification theories) with application to religious beliefs (four chapters). The third division is an integration of virtue epistemology into his viewpoints regarding foundationalism and justification (one chapter).

Chapters 1–3 argue that the historic Christian faith, along with Greek philosophy, used to focus on “forging virtuous habits of moral and intellectual character” in the formation of proper beliefs (p. 19). As these intellectual virtues (such as wisdom, studiousness, and intellectual humility) and moral virtues (such as compassion) are integrated into our lives, they will direct how we think, feel, and act, and contribute to what Wood calls “human flourishing” (p. 44). Human flourishing occurs because people are in the right position and intellectual framework to understand and apply their understanding virtuously.

Chapters 4–7 focus on the more standard issues of epistemology. In chapter four, there is an excellent summary of two ways of understanding how humans structure their noetic beliefs: strong and modest foundationalism. Strong foundationalism, the approach taken by Descartes as well as many philosophers of the Enlightenment, is based on the need to base claims of knowledge on logical certainties that people understand and can recall (internalism). These claims to certainty are called basic beliefs and are established through the categories of self-evident beliefs, beliefs evident to the senses and incorrigibility. Modest foundationalism, while also seeking to base claims to knowledge on basic beliefs, expands the categories of beliefs that are basic and seeks probabilities rather than certainty. Wood provides an excellent description of both views and aptly describes the inherent weaknesses and self-defeating nature of strong foundationalism. He properly states that the “‘strong foundationalists’ claim to base all knowledge on beliefs about which it is logically impossible to be mistaken is excessive in the extreme” (pp. 91–92).

After surveying these two standard views of acquiring noetic beliefs, Wood proceeds in chapter five to examine justification, the basis on which one can have claims to knowledge. He discusses the three main options for justification used today: evidentialism, coherentism, and reliabilism. Evidentialists, usually from the strong foundationalist camp, insist that claims of knowledge must be in propositional form in which the claimant to that knowledge is internally cognizant of its reason as well as being logically true (p. 109). Coherentism, which rejects the general foundationalist notion of basic beliefs, believes one justified in a claim to knowledge if a particular belief fits within one’s current belief system; thus, there is no regard for the normative aspect of a belief outside of one’s own belief system. While the coherentist position has what Wood calls a prephilosophical plausibility and does constitute one important strand in an overall structure of justification, its weaknesses (an inability to judge equally coherent rival systems along with the need for total recall of one’s own system at the time of analysis of a potentially new belief) prevent coherentism from being adopted as the sole way to justify beliefs. Both evidentialism, primarily seen in strong foundationalism, and coherentism suffer from the same basic flaw: requiring internal access to why one believes something and leaving out categories of belief (like perception) where one cannot evaluate a belief internally but accepts (or rejects) it immediately.

A superior justification system, called reliabilism, is examined by Wood in chapter six. Instead of relegating justification to an internal first-person perspective, reliabilism shifts the justification process to a more objective third-person perspective on the basis of the proper functioning and environment of one’s cognitive faculties. Using the theories of Thomas Reid as supplemented by Alvin Plantinga’s application of Reid’s theories to religious beliefs, Wood adroitly points out the general strengths (and occasional

weaknesses) of justifying knowledge on the basis of external operations of normal truth-conducive faculties. At the same time, he incorporates internalism through the acquisition and maintenance of intellectual and moral virtues in providing the proper environment for reliable knowledge. Wood closes in the last two chapters with the idea that while concerns, emotions, and virtues inform and are a part of one's cognitive equipment (p. 174), one must base claims of knowledge on probable (rather than certain) external (rather than internal) forms of belief. The integration of internalism and externalism has tremendous implications for apologetics and provides an epistemological basis for the need to cultivate virtuous character in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Professor Wood's book has much to commend it. First, it is written in an easy-to-read narrative style that could be used for college-level courses. Chapters four through six should be read by every faculty member involved in teaching Biblical and theological courses in order to grasp the epistemological basis of their various disciplines and (perhaps) abandon the claim of epistemological certainty in their field. The only weakness in the book is its failure to address other basic epistemological issues such as perception, memory, testimony, and skepticism. (For these topics, see Robert Audi, *Epistemology* [New York: Routledge, 1998].) This lone weakness, acknowledged by the author at the beginning of his text, does not detract from Wood's excellent grasp of basic epistemological issues, lucid writing style, and outstanding analysis of how a Christian can claim knowledge as well as be the kind of person God desires.

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*Christianity and Bioethics: Confronting Critical Issues.* By Mark W. Foreman. Joplin: College Press, 1999, 298 pp., \$21.99 paper.

The public and personal life of America is awash in discussions surrounding moral medical decision-making in health care dilemmas. The debate is constantly present, be it over physician-assisted suicide, the sale of human eggs, or private decisions regarding the continuation or forgoing of a family member's life support. The Christian voice is occasionally expressed amidst the humdrum of the secular ethical opinion. It is a voice that needs to provide a defensible moral alternative to common and rare moral dilemmas arising from medical practice in our current medical industrial complex.

Mark Foreman takes up the task of developing a well-reasoned apologetic to a plethora of "clinical issues" in bioethics affecting the professing Christian. His book targets a readership naive to the legal and ethical issues in this not-quite-new field of bioethics. Using a series of landmark legal cases as examples, Foreman raises questions deemed key to our current context of ethical dilemmas.

At the outset Foreman is to be commended for his desire to use terms such as *Christianity* and *bioethics* with clarity. He continues this practice with a host of other important expressions specific to the ethic's language game. His elaboration of terms, such as *deontology* and *nonmaleficence*, are both accurate and engaging, especially with his occasional use of unique humor. The use of annotated lists of websites adds a welcome addition to the end of each chapter which complement the short but satisfactory lists of key reference books in each area of discussion. It would have been useful, however, to further complement the list of references, websites, and glossary of terms with an index. This might be of particular interest for those readers seeking common strands of thought throughout the book such as *sanctity of life* or *quality of life*.

He notes his limitation of subject matter, which, except for a short excursus on genetic ethics, emphasizes legal cases about the termination of life. He does a better-than-adequate job raising the ethical issues in areas addressed. A sprinkling of key Biblical

passages along with Christian reflections on philosophical flashpoints, like personhood, qualify the book for the category of Christian genera.

Although Foreman does a good job of raising the basic issues when discussing abortion and physician-assisted suicide, there is a concern regarding clarity in the details. For instance, in the context of the legal status of Oregon's Death with Dignity Act, Foreman states that "Judge Hogan decided to dismiss the lawsuit" that enjoined Oregon's assisted suicide law in light of the failure of the anti-assisted suicide Ballot Measure 51 to pass. In fact, the Ninth Circuit Court ordered Judge Hogan to lift the injunction on assisted suicide, an order which stood after the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear the case. Further, Judge Hogan lifted his injunction against assisted suicide October 17, 1997, making the law effective one week before the Measure 51 vote on November 1, 1994. One may conclude that the defeat of Measure 51 was not one of the primary elements in his dismissal of the case as stated.

Perhaps the most disappointing feature, however, is the lack of a clear model to aid those "confronted with clinical issues." Foreman assumes that readers can connect the dots between ethical theory, Christian reflection, and the moral decision. This makes the text less useful for first-time or maybe one-time students of the subject who might be better served by simpler books like Orr, Schiedermyer, and Biebel's book *Life and Death Decisions*. Also, readers should be aware that they will not be confronted with the "clinical issues" of bioethics as suggested in the title; rather, they will encounter important elements of key legal cases. These things considered, college students and laypersons will find benefit in reading *Christianity and Bioethics* as collateral reading in the areas of bioethical theory, euthanasia, physician-assisted suicide, and abortion. Foreman should be complimented for his well-reasoned and clearly articulated Christian approach in these areas.

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*Understanding Folk Religion: A Christian Response to Popular Beliefs and Practices.* By Paul G. Hiebert, R. Daniel Shaw, and Tite Tiéno. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 448 pp., \$29.99 paper.

This is an exciting book that is certain to become a standard text for mission courses at evangelical Bible colleges and seminaries. The book is divided into four sections: (1) developing an analytical model; (2) folk religious beliefs; (3) folk religious practices; and (4) Christian responses to folk religion. By introducing evangelicals to folk religions, which are defined as "the religious beliefs and practices of the common people," the book breaks new ground. It contains many good insights and useful suggestions that deserve to be widely discussed. Therefore, instead of simply summarizing the book itself, what follows are some serious criticism that reflect my unease with several aspects of the work. I hope my comments will provoke further debate.

First, the book begins with the now standard evangelical condemnation of the Enlightenment and its works. This ritual invocation mars the entire approach, because it enables the authors to substitute vague worldview analysis for the serious study of specific folk beliefs. Further, their failure to understand the complexity of the actual Enlightenment and the subsequent reaction known as Romanticism leads the authors to disparage nineteenth-century missionaries by claiming that the Enlightenment, colonialism, and the theory of evolution distorted their preaching of the gospel. Could it be that the authors have succumbed to secular ideology that claims missionaries destroyed indigenous cultures and to anti-imperialist rhetoric without examining what nine-

teenth-century missionaries actually did and how they interacted with various imperial regimes? Perhaps some work in mission archives or grappling with the actual writings of missionaries of an earlier age would provide a different perspective. A good example of this is Ulrich van der Heyden's edited volume *Missionsgeschichte, Kirchengeschichte, Weltgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1996).

Second, the authors' mistreatment of the Enlightenment is characteristic of a general lack of historical awareness. For example, we are told that "the Catholic mission movement began when Columbus discovered the New World" (p. 88), but this notion is dispelled by Richard Fletcher's excellent *The Conversion of Europe 371–1386* (London: Fonana, 1998). On a positive note, the authors wisely recommend that contemporary missionaries encourage an interest in the biographies of their converts, but they apparently overlook the fact that writing Christian history as a chain of biography was the technique of the great German Church historian Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789–1850) whose method was explicitly taken over in the nineteenth century by the Berlin Mission in a way similar to that advocated here (cf. Karla Poewe and Ulrich van der Heyden, "The Berlin Mission Society and Its Theology," *South African Historical Journal* 40 [May 1999] 21–50).

Third, despite their constant complaint that Western Christians have adopted a "split-level" form of Christianity causing them to live in a segmented world, the authors' own failure to really engage non-evangelical scholarship displays the very segmentation they deplore (e.g. pp. 15 and 369). This is particularly clear in their treatment of anthropological literature that appears to be used as a source for proof texts rather than as something of real value. Thus, although the authors clearly like the work of British social anthropologists Evans-Pritchard, Victor Turner, and Mary Douglas, as well as the South African Monica Wilson (all of whom were/are Christians), there is no attempt to interact with their theories beyond using citations from their work to prove a point. Further, there is no mention or attempt to grapple with Kenelm Burridge's excellent *In the Way: A Study of Christian Missionary Endeavours* (Vancouver: UBC, 1991).

Fourth, this unease with non-evangelical scholarship and proof text approach leads the authors to treat all their sources as though they were equally valuable and to fail to distinguish solid scholarship from popular writings. For example, when discussing "Witchcraft and Sorcery" (pp. 148–153) they treat Evans-Pritchard, Mercea Eliade, and Geoffery Parrinder (pp. 148 and 151) as experts on East African witchcraft. In fact, only Evans-Pritchard was an expert on this topic while the others cited East African examples in popular books. A serious treatment of a topic like this must use primary sources like those of Evans-Pritchard, John Middleton, Mary Douglas, or Fred Welbourn, not highly questionable secondary sources like those of Eliade and Parrinder.

Fifth, the chapter on mythology is an important one, although the authors fail to recognize that any story whatsoever can become a myth and that consequently defining myth as *a story with culturally formative power* makes a lot of sense. The major weakness of the chapter is its endorsement of a contemporary version of "Indo-European myth," which they say is grounded in a "deep belief that relationships in the cosmos are based on competition, that competition is good, and that the good (strong, successful, intelligent) will ultimately win" (p. 272). This dangerous view originated with the German *völkisch* movement and the writings of the Nazi theoretician Alfred Rosenberg (cf. George L. Mosse, *Towards the Final Solution* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985] 42–50).

Finally, although the importance of new religious movements is recognized, this section is weak, because the authors rely on dated literature. For example, the discussion of African independent churches uses literature written in the late 1960s and early 1970s and makes no mention of anything published after 1981, despite the fact that most studies on the topic have appeared in the last ten years. As a result, what they say about the relationship between diviners, prophets, Zionists, etc., is misleading.

These issues are now recognized to be far more complex than was once thought, as can be seen from books like G. C. Oosthuizen's and S. W. D. Dube's *Afro-Christianity at the Grassroots* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994).

Despite these criticisms this is a valuable book that deserves to be widely read, used, and discussed. Even though the authors do not fulfill the promise of the title by failing to come to grips in any depth with specific folk religions, it represents an important step forward in evangelical scholarship.

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*The Southern Baptist Convention—A Sesquicentennial History.* By Jesse C. Fletcher. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994, xiv + 463 pp., \$29.99.

This concise book was written for the 150th anniversary of the Southern Baptist Convention, which took place in 1995. As such, it was written to celebrate the accomplishments of a denomination that has received scant attention in regard to its importance. This omission is demonstrated by the well-known American Church historian Sydney E. Ahlstrom who wrote his *Theology in America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy* without mentioning one Southern Baptist or, for that matter, anyone from the South.

Jesse Fletcher has written an outstanding introduction about the Southern Convention. He mastered a vast amount of information and understands the functioning intricacies of this organization. As pastor, professor, historian and educational leader in the Convention, he has intimate knowledge of the major protagonists within the last fifty years. He also had the first manuscript read by the leading denominational Church historians.

The book is divided into ten chapters: "Roots and Reason, 1609–1845"; "A New Connection, 1845–1865"; "Reconstruction and Survival, 1865–1900"; "Defining a Denomination, 1900–1927"; "Adversity and Challenge, 1927–1945"; "The Great Advance, 1945–1964"; "The Uneasy Consensus 1964–1979"; "The Battle for the Gavel, 1979–1990"; "New Initiatives, 1990–1993"; and "Foundations for the Future, 1993–Forward." The book concludes with four helpful appendixes, notes, bibliography and an index.

The Southern Baptist Convention during the last few decades has been known in the public press for its controversies between the moderates and the conservatives. Fletcher analyzes these controversies and shows that both sides have committed mistakes. There have been individuals and groups whose actions are laudable and less laudable. While he may end up being criticized by both moderates and conservatives, Fletcher does attempt to be fair in his assessments. He also demonstrates that in spite of the various controversies, the major emphases of the Southern Convention are personal evangelism and missions. These foundational realities have propelled the Convention to become "a people numbering more than 15 million gathered in more than 38,000 churches organized into a national organization that includes work in every state of the Union and over 120 countries" (p. 1).

Fletcher keeps a flowing chronology while evidencing those ideas that are being repeated or new ideas that become a part of the denomination's mainstream. Landmarkism (according to Leon McBeth, the concept without which it is impossible to understand Southern Baptists; p. 60), based on Prov 22:28, which in its incipient form insisted that only Baptist churches were authorized to baptize and to serve the Lord's Supper, was a constant source of friction, refining definition and vitality in the Convention (pp. 60–66, 104–107, 114–115, 375–376, 386). Biblical controversies are evi-

denced, including those involving (1) Cranford Howell Toy (pp. 89–92), who produced a major crisis at the Southern Seminary in 1879; (2) Ralph Elliott, whose publication of *Genesis* in 1961 forced him to leave the Southern Convention and join the American Baptist Churches Convention (pp. 205–210); and (3) the editorial difficulties in the Sunday School Board (pp. 236, 310).

While the congregational democratic style, the state conventions, and the major boards (Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Women's Ministry) are of great importance, Fletcher provides abundant evidence that the Convention made tremendous strides because its leaders were courageous men and women who envisioned great things for God. James P. Boyce and John A. Broadus were foundational in establishing seminaries for the Southern Baptist Convention. They were followed by a plethora of great seminary presidents and professors. The Convention continues to have some of the largest seminaries of our day. The Foreign Missions Board had people like Lottie Moon (pp. 84–88, 124–126) whom the *Foreign Missions Journal* eulogized in 1912 as "the best man among our missionaries" and in whose memory Southern Baptists collect their special contributions for missions. Baker James Cauthen, the president of the Foreign Missions Board from 1953–1979, expanded the appointments of missionaries by three hundred percent and started new missions in sixty-seven countries. Fletcher summarizes this leader's impact: "Cauthen was one of the most effective speakers in Southern Baptist life, and Foreign Missions night at the Southern Baptist Convention each year tended to be the best attended and the most emotionally charged session" (p. 212). This is in addition to those pastors, seminary presidents, and professors who were chosen as presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention because of their skills and effectiveness and whose names are well known today: E. Y. Mullins, George E. Truett, Robert E. Lee, W. A. Criswell, Charles Stanley, Adrian Rogers, and others.

There are other longer histories of the Southern Baptist Convention that one can use, and Fletcher generously evaluates them. There are shorter works, written from a more selected thematic flavor. Fletcher's work is succinct, celebrant, and an excellent introduction into a denomination that, in spite of all its controversies, is making a great impact in America and throughout the world. Laity, seminary students, and professors will greatly benefit from reading this book. The only drawback that I hope will be remedied by the publishers in future editions is the use of footnotes rather than endnotes.

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*Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-centered Approach to Christian Defense.* By David K. Clark. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993, 245 pp., \$14.99 paper.

Anyone who desires to do apologetics one-on-one will find much help in this book. Clark has taken the academic discipline of apologetics and brought it into real life by showing how to engage in interpersonal dialogue on apologetic issues.

The book has two parts. Part 1 deals with theoretical issues concerning apologetic methodology. Chapter 1 covers the relationship between faith and reason. Clark shows that much of the confusion in the faith-reason debate revolves around equivocal uses of the terms "faith" and "reason." Those who pit faith against reason usually define faith as a way of knowing. Likewise, some define reason as "thinking that operates independently of God" (p. 13). Clark gives a more neutral definition of reason: "the human function of mentally processing experiences and ideas" (p. 13). And he appropriately defines faith biblically as *trust*. In his words, faith is "the whole soul committed to God in Christ" (p. 22). Defined in these ways, there can be no conflict between faith and reason.

Subsequent chapters in Part 1 deal with aspects of religious epistemology. Clark rightly rejects classical foundationalism. However, he also rejects Reformed epistemology, the view that belief in God is properly basic. Instead, he opts for "soft rationalism" that lies between classical foundationalism's demand that all beliefs be supported by evidence and Reformed epistemology's insistence on the proper basicity of belief in God. Contra Reformed epistemology, he thinks that religious experience is inadequate for grounding religious belief, urging that "we should confirm a claimed experience of God by connecting it to a wider web of belief." Why? "[B]ecause prior beliefs can contaminate experience," thus leading different people to give conflicting interpretations of their religious experiences (p. 92). Apparently, Clark does not believe that an experience of God can be self-authenticating.

Clark's soft rationalism leads him to adopt a "cumulative case" approach to apologetics, whereby competing worldviews are tested by such criteria as consistency, coherence, comprehensiveness, and congruence. Using such criteria, the apologist seeks to show that Christian theism provides the best explanation for wide ranges of data in areas like cosmology, anthropology, ethics, religious experience, and history. In chapter 5, Clark sets out a helpful taxonomy of apologetic methods, identifying his approach as a species of *classical apologetics*.

Part 2 addresses the "dialogical" aspect of apologetics. Clark seeks to show how one can take the theory elaborated in Part 1 and put it to use in the context of personal dialogue. Clark discusses the "dimensions of dialogue" that include the classical categories of rhetoric (logos, pathos, ethos), as well as cultural factors. Chapter 6 deals primarily with logic and argument. Its most helpful feature is the discussion of Toulmin's model for argument assessment (pp. 136–139).

Chapter 7 describes the role personal attitudes play in persuasion. Clark reminds us that effective apologetics involves more than presenting a good argument. We must also understand the influence antecedent attitudes may have on the assessment of arguments and develop skills for promoting attitude change. The same can be said for the influence of culture (chap. 8). Clark addresses the problems of cross-cultural communication and the prejudices and stereotypes held by both the apologist and the unbeliever that can hinder effective dialogue. The apologist must learn to undress the gospel from his own cultural forms and communicate it in the forms of his dialogue partner. This implies *cultural* relativism (not *ethical* relativism) in which one recognizes legitimate cultural variety and seeks to judge the customs of another culture from within that culture.

Chapter 9 provides a concrete strategy for dialogical apologetics. Clark gives suggestions for overcoming obstacles to dialogue and for effectively presenting arguments. One strategy Clark outlines is the use of "mystifying answers" to "dissertation questions." If someone asks, "What do you do?," the apologist can spark interest by answering, "I help people understand the most important book ever written" (p. 217). According to Clark, such answers can "get a person thinking about how the gospel would benefit him" (p. 218). I would agree with this to a point. After all, what could be more beneficial to an unbeliever than to have his sins forgiven? However, I wonder if Clark says enough to guard against unbelievers coming to Christ for the *wrong reasons*. Didn't Christ say to those who came to him only for bread, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate . . . his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26)? I don't think Clark would disagree, but he could have made this clear.

Such questions notwithstanding, Clark has made a unique and eminently beneficial contribution to the discipline of apologetics. I hope every apologist (and evangelist!) will read this book and take its lessons to heart.

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