

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Encountering the Book of Genesis: A Study of Its Content and Issues.* By Bill T. Arnold. Encountering Biblical Studies. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, 234 pp., \$24.99.

This textbook in the Encountering Biblical Studies series is designed for use as an upper-level college text, as a complement to an OT survey text used earlier in a student's career. The aim is not exegetical analysis but a survey of the book of Genesis that highlights the book's theological message and practical significance. The publisher's preface lists both intellectual and attitudinal goals. Discussion of introductory critical issues related to the book of Genesis is reserved for the end of the textbook.

The format of the book is attractive and provides many helpful instructional tools. Numerous photographs and tables fill the pages, along with sidebars detailing key issues raised by the text. Each chapter opens with an outline of its contents and a list of objectives, and closes with a list of study questions. These features make the book easy to use in a classroom setting.

In terms of content, the book is divided into five major sections and 14 chapters. The first four major sections follow the author's theological outline of the book of Genesis, covering chaps. 1–11, 12–25, 25–36, and 37–50, respectively. The second section includes a valuable chapter describing the differences between the worldview of Genesis and that of Israel's neighbors. The final section deals with authorship of Genesis and includes an extensive and helpful overview of both evidence of authorship and interpretations of that evidence.

The strength of *Encountering the Book of Genesis* is its balanced coverage of the whole book of Genesis, including interpretive, theological, and critical issues. The author is even-handed in dealing with the wide variety of questions raised by the book of Genesis and writes in a style that is both theologically sophisticated and accessible to college students.

Whereas the book for the most part admirably accomplishes its purposes, there are a number of features that deserve further comment. First, for a book aimed at upper-level college students, more emphasis on method would be beneficial. The textbook does a wonderful job of summarizing the content of Genesis and exposing students to some of the key debates about that content. However, assuming that some of these issues would already have been addressed in an introductory survey class, more purposeful discussion of interpretive method would be appropriate.

Related to the issue of method is the reading of the Genesis narrative. The author of Genesis does little moral evaluation, preferring instead to describe characters' actions and to show how in spite of their actions God keeps his promises. Arnold occasionally draws moral lessons from the characters (e.g. pp. 105, 122) in a way that goes against the grain of the text of Genesis. Also, whereas the fact that Genesis is part of a larger work (the Pentateuch) is clearly recognized in the discussion of authorship (e.g. pp. 171–73), the interpretive implications of this fact are not fully explored in the commentary section.

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*Now Choose Life: Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy.* By J. Gary Millar. New Studies in Biblical Theology. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, 216 pp., \$24.00 paper.

The New Studies in Biblical Theology series, edited by D. A. Carson, attempts to provide scholarly treatments of the Bible in a manner that is accessible to students, pastors, and general readers. Millar, whose doctoral dissertation at the Queen's College, Oxford, was entitled *The Ethics of Deuteronomy*, and who coauthored with J. G. McConville *Time and Place in Deuteronomy* (JSOTSup 179), was at the time of publication also the pastor of a Presbyterian church in Northern Ireland. Millar, then, would appear to be an apt choice for attempting to bridge the gap between scholars and that mythical "general reader." However, only the most persistent "general reader" is likely to plough through the complexities of his contribution to this series.

The subtitle, *Theology and Ethics in Deuteronomy*, might suggest that Millar intends to take the laws of Deuteronomy and apply this material ethically to life in the modern world. Millar does mention scholars who attempt such a synthesis: W. Kaiser (whom he dismisses as "pre-critical"), B. Birch, Christopher Wright (whose work he clearly likes), and W. Janzen. However, readers looking for that kind of synthesis in Millar's work will be disappointed. Instead, Millar is attempting to describe how the ethical system of Deuteronomy intertwines with certain of its literary themes: covenant, journey, law, the nations, and human nature.

In chapter two, "Ethics and Covenant," Millar shows how Deuteronomy's ethical admonition to "choose life" ("love," "remember," "serve," "fear," "love," "cleave") draws upon the covenant-treaty metaphor. Obedience to ethical demands is motivated by the covenant promise of rewards in the land that ensue upon wholehearted compliance. Conversely, according to Deuteronomy, failure to occupy the land would reflect Israel's failure to be faithful to the covenant.

In chapter three, "Ethics and Journey," Millar shows how the call to obedience "today" in the plains of Moab was informed by its awareness of God's dealings with them along the journey in the past (Deuteronomy 1–4). Deuteronomy's portrayal of the journey from Egypt to Canaan (Deuteronomy 1–11), and its threat of future exile with the promise of subsequent return (Deuteronomy 27–34), are intended to show the covenant relationship with Yahweh to be a dynamic one that, though particular application may change with circumstances along the way, always involves living obediently each and every "today," whatever the circumstance.

Chapter four, "Ethics and Law," begins with an excursus disputing Wellhausen's conclusions concerning the nature of the "place Yahweh chooses" (Deuteronomy 12), followed by a discussion of the relationship between Biblical and cuneiform laws. Though not convinced by the attempts of Kaufman and Braulik to see the laws of Deuteronomy 12–26 as organized around the Decalogue, Millar nonetheless recognizes significant interrelationships between the Decalogue and these laws. This in turn allows, in principle, a *theological* reading of the laws of Deuteronomy 12–26. A superficial overview of each of these laws confirms that these "laws" are profoundly theological, representing an application of the Decalogue and the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:33)—both given in conjunction with the covenant at Horeb—to the new situation facing Israel about to enter the land.

Chapter five is "Ethics and the Nations." Deuteronomy's theology of election is that Israel has a "most favored nation" status with God. Correspondingly, Israel was to separate itself ethically from other nations. Crucial in "choosing life" is Israel's repudiating all things Canaanite. The command to annihilate the Canaanites is not a reflection of a "vicious nationalism," nor even a battle plan, as much as an instance of theological preaching that is somewhat hyperbolic, for Deuteronomy asserts not only that Canaanites are to be destroyed, but that the survivors are to be kept at arm's

length (cf. Deut 7:1). The negative statements about the nations must be balanced with positive ones: Yahweh has given various nations their lands. Foreign sojourners are to be treated decently along with widows and orphans. Moreover, other nations can experience blessings through their association with Israel (e.g. Edom and Egypt; Deut 23:7–8).

Chapter six, “Ethics and Human Nature,” shows how repeated calls to obey reflect an inherent waywardness in Israel. Indeed, Deuteronomy assumes that ultimately Israel will fail to obey and, in accord with covenant curses, be expelled from the land, and yet God in his grace will restore them (Deut 30:3–9). This anticipates the new covenant of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

Millar’s book too often talks about the Biblical text, or about what scholars say about the text, rather than letting the text speak for itself. Anyone not intimately familiar with Deuteronomy will constantly have to look up Bible verses to understand Millar. More Scriptural quotations would have made the book much easier to read and understand. Nonetheless, the book does accomplish its goal of elucidating several themes in Deuteronomy and their relationship with the ethical admonitions of that book.

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*Those Elusive Deuteronomists: The Phenomenon of Pan-Deuteronomism.* Edited by Linda S. Shearing and Steven L. McKenzie. JSOTSup 268. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, 288 pp., n.p.

This volume consists of a series of essays from various sources on the broad topic of “Deuteronomism,” prefaced by an introduction that sets the scene from Shearing and concluded by a reflective epilogue from McKenzie. Part 1 of the book contains three essays (by Richard Coggins, Norbert Lohfink, and Robert Wilson), each of which in its own way highlights the imprecision of the term “Deuteronomistic” in modern scholarly discussions. Coggins seeks greater clarity from scholars in speaking, first, of a particular book (Deuteronomy) and its immediately related texts; second, of a literary process through which other pieces of OT literature reached their final form; and third, of an ideological movement that played a major part in shaping the self-understanding of Judaism. “To use the same name for them all is to invite a breakdown in understanding” (p. 35). Lohfink argues for reserving the word “Deuteronomistic” for describing purely textual affiliation and advocates careful criteria for deciding such affiliation; cautions us about making too immediate a connection between the revision of a text and any corresponding “movement” (“the phenomenon of rereading is sufficiently explicable as an outcome of the mechanisms of its connections with libraries and education,” p. 56); and expresses doubts, indeed, over the existence of a specifically Deuteronomistic “movement.” Wilson documents the various ways in which Deuteronomistic influence has come to be found pervasively throughout the OT, noting first that, although numerous scholars “agree that much of the Hebrew Bible is Deuteronomistic, they do not agree on what makes it Deuteronomistic” (p. 78); and secondly, that there is to be found in the extant scholarly literature when taken together “no coherent account of Deuteronomism as a social, political or religious movement” (p. 81). He considers two alternative conclusions: that Deuteronomism was a wide-ranging movement that was much more diverse and longer lived than scholars commonly think (his favored view), or that “the concept of Deuteronomism has become so amorphous that it no longer has any analytical precision and so ought to be abandoned” (p. 82).

Part 2 of the book contains four essays (by Joseph Blenkinsopp, Graeme Auld, Robert Kugler, and James Crenshaw) that consider Deuteronomism as it relates to broad sections of the OT: the Tetrateuch, the Former Prophets, the Latter Prophets, and the Writings, respectively. Those persuaded by the more skeptical tones of Part 1 are bound to be least impressed here by Blenkinsopp, who advocates finding a “Deuteronomistic account of national origins” in Genesis-Numbers, while “leaving open the question whether it is the work of authors or editors, of an individual, a committee or a school” (p. 112). Auld, by contrast, confesses himself unsure of what the Deuteronomists did in respect of the composition of the Former Prophets and whether these people should in any case be called Deuteronomists (since he believes that the Former Prophets influenced Deuteronomy rather than *vice versa*). This is not good news for pan-Deuteronomistic enthusiasts, for, as Kugler points out, after noting the very limited evidence for a Deuteronomistic redaction of the Latter Prophets, “only Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History permit the hypothesis [of a Deuteronomistic school] the little vitality it has” (p. 144). Crenshaw similarly finds no persuasive evidence of specific connections between Deuteronomy on the one hand and the various books of the Writings on the other.

Part 3 of the book contains six essays (by John Van Seters, Marc Brettler, Thomas Römer, Corrine Patton, Stephen Cook, and Ehud Ben Zvi) that focus on specific passages thought to contain Deuteronomistic influence or to have influenced Deuteronomy. Van Seters, dealing primarily with Exodus 19–24 and 32–34, argues that there is no Deuteronomistic redaction in the Tetrateuch (thus stating the opposite case to Blenkinsopp). Brettler argues that Deut 30:1–10 is not, as commonly supposed, a late and rather typical Deuteronomistic sermon. Römer, noting certain tensions within the Deuteronomistic material in the book of Jeremiah, argues for two Deuteronomistic redactions of the book. Patton proposes that the book of Ezekiel both uses motifs and traditions known from Deuteronomistic tradition and also influences Jeremiah and Deuteronomistic literature. Cook argues for specific Deuteronomistic redaction of the book of Micah (among other prophetic books), while Ben Zvi, focusing on similarities between Micah, Zephaniah, Obadiah, and the Deuteronomistic History, denies any specifically Deuteronomistic redaction. “Literary style by itself does not provide sufficient grounds to postulate the historical existence of a separate ‘movement’ for generations” (p. 257).

This is an interesting volume, which should result, if read and engaged seriously by OT scholars more generally, in a far more cautious approach being taken to matters “Deuteronomistic” than has sometimes been the case in recent decades. This is because the arguments advanced by the more skeptical writers in the collection are far more persuasive than those advanced by more traditional scholars, cutting deeper, I believe, than is made apparent in McKenzie’s summarizing and reflective postscript. For McKenzie, who speaks in general only of Deuteronomistic *influence* on the Bible rather than of Deuteronomistic *redaction*, still holds that the Former Prophets passed through the hands of one or more (actual) Deuteronomists. It is entirely unclear, however, why we should shield study of the Former Prophets from the full force of the arguments in the volume that tend to suggest that we should not in general assume the existence of any such people as “Deuteronomists” with a “Deuteronomistic theology.” Why not think of a number of narrative texts that in different ways over the course of time have been written and edited by those influenced, among other things, by the book of Deuteronomy, which happened to be an important part of Israel’s Scripture? This would have the advantage of allowing us to see more clearly both the narrative and theological diversity of the books of the Former Prophets and the enormous influence upon them of Biblical books other than the all-absorbing Deuteronomy

(e.g. the influence of Exodus on 1 and 2 Kings). My point is this: that in order to name anything “Deuteronomistic” (even the “Deuteronomistic History”) and expect to be taken seriously, one should be required to demonstrate that the concept of “Deuteronomism” is itself coherent. It is precisely the possibility of such demonstration that the volume under discussion here calls into question. In these circumstances, to retreat from a Pan-Deuteronomism that sees Deuteronomists everywhere in the OT to a mere-Deuteronomism that sees Deuteronomists only in certain places is not to retreat to a place of scholarly safety. It is to jump from the frying Pan into the fire.

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*The Face of Old Testament Studies.* Edited by David W. Baker and Bill T. Arnold. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 512 pp., \$34.99.

This is the book for those who lament the increasing difficulty of keeping up in their field. While academic research marches on apace, most faculty juggle teaching, committee work, student advising, weekend ministry, family life, and (if time permits) their own research and writing. Meanwhile, every week (or so it seems) Sheffield publishes a brand-new monograph—the latest scholarship—and journals always seem to arrive when faculty are the busiest. Keep up, indeed! That’s why this book is so very important: it gives a “face” to OT studies, a thorough glimpse of its major recent developments. It joins the venerable genre that the Society for Old Testament Study (United Kingdom) pioneered and that the Society of Biblical Literature (North America) continues, but it is unique in incorporating the oft-overlooked contributions of evangelical scholars to the larger discussions. In general, it achieves its stated purpose and will serve its readership well. I predict that many a scholar will consult its rich treasure of information—or, at least they should.

Don’t be misled by the book’s subtitle (“A Survey of Contemporary Approaches”), however. This volume’s contributors set out to engage current issues and scholars’s views deeply rather than merely to survey methodologies. One of its strengths is its logical organizational design. The first four chapters treat methodology and archaeology (i.e. textual criticism [Al Wolters], epigraphy [Mark W. Chavalas and Edwin C. Hostetter], archaeology [Mark W. Chavalas and Murray Adamthwaite], and recent literary approaches [Tremper Longman III]), while the following five peruse the canon with an eye on historical matters (Pentateuch [Gordon J. Wenham], historiography [V. Philips Long], early Israel’s history [K. Lawson Younger, Jr.], the monarchy [Gary N. Knoppers], and the exile and post-exile [H. G. M. Williamson]). Then follow four chapters center broadly on OT literary genres (prophecy and prophets [David W. Baker], wisdom literature [Bruce K. Waltke and David Diewert], Psalms [David M. Howard, Jr.], and apocalyptic [John N. Oswalt]). The concluding three chapters concern more general topics (ancient Israelite religion [Bill T. Arnold], the application of social science methodology [Charles E. Carter], and OT theology [R. W. L. Moberly]). A second strength is the competence of the contributors and the quality of their essays. The list of contributors reads like a “Who’s Who” of evangelical scholarship. Most are well known for their work, several I rank as eminent, and a few are younger, emerging scholars. Most teach in American colleges, universities, and seminaries, but three come from Canada and England, and one from Australia. On the other hand, the

roster's international "face" does not give the book an international flavor. Noticeably absent are non-European and female contributors, an absence that, in my view, presents too narrow a perspectival face. Their inclusion would have enhanced even further an already-strong volume. That criticism notwithstanding, I applaud the broad definition of "evangelical" that guided the editors in their selection of contributors.

For the most part, the editors successfully maintained quality across the chapters. Most chapters summarize and critique the views of scholars or schools of thought that currently shape the field. Most chapters also conclude by plotting "where we go from here" or by drawing implications in light of that shaping. So, for example, after reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of structuralism, deconstruction, and post-structuralism (pp. 102–13), Longman calls for sensitivity to the Bible's literary conventions (pp. 114–15). Long assesses recent approaches to historiography (pp. 145–65), then outlines an "integrative approach" that reckons with the OT's theological, historical, and literary dimensions (pp. 165–75). Arnold wisely maneuvers the minefield concerning the origins of Yahwism and the history of Israelite monotheism (pp. 391–415), then lays out several topics for future research (pp. 415–20). The chapter on "Epigraphic Light on the Old Testament" (pp. 38–58) by Chavalas and Hostetter marks an unfortunate exception to the pattern by failing to draw implication of its survey of epigraphic texts for OT studies. Though tedious to read, however, it remains invaluable as a ready reference tool on important inscriptions. Also (with apologies to my friend and its author), the chapter on "Israelite Prophets and Prophecy" (pp. 266–94) tended toward an annotated bibliography of newer sources rather than a summary and critique of major opinions. I would have benefited more from the latter than the former.

Further, the addition of two additional chapters would have filled two topical lacunae. For those who work in Hebrew and Aramaic and who teach it to students, a chapter reviewing more recent understanding of their grammar and syntax would round out the book's otherwise comprehensive picture. For example, it would evaluate the work of R. Polzin and A. Hurvitz, to name a few, on the history of the Hebrew language as well as the syntax manual of M. P. O'Connor and B. K. Waltke. The stress would fall less on morphological issues than on grammatical/syntactical issues that guide the ongoing exegesis of texts. Also, discussion of recent developments in discourse analysis, the method pioneered by Robert Longacre and others, would similarly benefit exegetes. The second lacuna is the absence of a concluding chapter that draws together insights from all the preceding chapters and reflects on the state of affairs in Old Testament scholarship in general, especially from an evangelical viewpoint. It would address the question, "Where are we headed?"

So, in which direction is the "face of Old Testament studies" facing? Certainly, that face increasingly looks to the social sciences for new insights into ancient Israel and the Biblical text. Most readers of this Journal probably eye that direction warily as treacherous terrain haunted by renegade scholars brandishing their secular theories against the Biblical text. Undoubtedly, the voices of the so-called minimalists ring loud, for example, in current discussions of early Israel's history and lead some evangelicals to dismiss all social-scientific approaches. In my view, that reticence may make Carter's chapter "Opening Windows on Biblical Worlds" (pp. 421–51) one of the book's most important. Besides summarizing major views on major topics, he insightfully diagnoses the roots of that reticence—he calls it a "siege mentality" (p. 448)—and lays out a persuasive cure, an approach by which evangelicals may nourish their understanding of the Bible from the best fruits of the social sciences while sifting out their unpalatable aspects.

Second, the current face of scholarship confronts evidence that beckons scholars, including evangelicals, to rethink certain long-established views. Rather than recycle

older views, here this volume boldly leads readers into new, unmapped terrain. For example, if Chavalas and Adamthwaite are correct ("Archaeological Light on the Old Testament," pp. 59–96), neither the early-nor late-date models for the exodus and conquest account for the evidence. Instead, if I read their tentative proposal correctly, events chronologically fit best at the end of the Middle Bronze period and historically consist of a dynamically shifting struggle back and forth between Israel and Canaan's inhabitants rather than a once-for-all blitzkrieg conquest. How, then, are we to read the scenario in Joshua? Here Younger ("Early Israel in Recent Biblical Scholarship," pp. 176–206) also maps out the new terrain, calling for us to read Joshua in a more carefully nuanced way, one that both takes seriously Biblical claims and accepts—and this is a stimulating new challenge—its evidentiary limitations as well. In my view, the significance of such theses is not their content, however persuasive, but the fact that they engage all the Biblical and extra-Biblical evidence and propose a new synthesis rather than simply defend traditional views. In that they symbolize the new maturity in OT scholarship as practiced by evangelicals that infuses this volume.

In sum, this volume is a "must read" for OT guild members, whether evangelical or otherwise. Over time it will become as well-worn a friend, frequently consulted and cited on a host of subjects, as its predecessors from the United Kingdom and North America. It also benefits educators in two very important ways: it challenges them to update their course content and provides reading material for course assignments. I anticipate requiring students to read most of its chapters in my courses and, hence, to pass on its healthy influence to the emerging leaders of the next millennium. Not all readers will concur with the analysis and theses of its contributors. Some will find them too conservative, others too liberal, but all must reckon with its pages and its occasional provocative proposals, and all should benefit greatly. I only hope that the publisher would provide us a companion "Face of New Testament Studies" of the same quality and scope.

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*Studies in Biblical Narrative: Style, Structure, and the Ancient Near Eastern Literary Background.* By Yitzhak Avishur. Tel Aviv-Jaffa: Archaeological Center, 1999, 376 pp., n.p.

The nature of research is that one often knows where one is going only after arriving there. The polished integrity of many a monograph belies the preliminary studies, side trails, and detours that the author has had to traverse. This volume, consisting half of articles previously published in Hebrew and half of unpublished studies, captures the dynamism of the author's preoccupation with the central theme of literary structure over more than two decades. The author's approach to structure focuses on the symmetric, on patterns of repetition in the surface forms of the language, and does not interact with other prominent approaches, such as synthetic (constructing a grammar of discourse analogues, exemplified by Robert Longacre), and semantic (tracing relations among the underlying themes or concepts, exemplified by Daniel Patte).

The ancients apprehended texts more with the ear than with the eye, perceiving them less as a two-dimensional array of text on the page than as a one-dimensional stream. A one-dimensional structure supports only two primitive symmetrical patterns: translation symmetry (ABC–A'B'C'), yielding the literary alternation, or what

Avishur calls “symmetrical structure”) and mirror symmetry (ABC C’B’A’, yielding chiasmus). Both are widely attested in Biblical texts. In Part 1, Avishur focuses on chiasmic structures in stories from Genesis and Exodus. He asserts that the combination of alternation and chiasm is rare, though his own examples provide several cases where more attention to such combination would yield a better understanding of the text. Part 2 traces literary formulas that appear both in the Ugaritic literature and in the Bible. Such formulas can be considered discontinuous alternation.

Avishur does not appreciate the wide repertoire of structural mechanisms that ancient writers constructed from the primitive elements of alternation and chiasm. As a result, his analyses often miss important nuances. While he cites prominent work by previous scholars, his analyses sometimes betray an ignorance of their insights. For instance, he cites some of Lund’s papers, but does not appear to have read his foundational dissertation, a work that would greatly strengthen his analysis of Genesis 22 through its “third law,” which observes the recurrence of similar items at the extremes and the center of a chiasmic structure. It is also puzzling that he repeatedly misspells the surname of his fellow countryman Yehuda Radday.

Seeing patterns of repetition in a text leaves considerable scope for subjectivity. Commendably, Avishur is not content with content-based repetition but insists on clear formal correspondences. However, he falls into other traps. One is linking formal elements quite independently of their immediate context, sometimes breaking syntactic units (as in his analysis of Gen 18:10–16) or leaving intervening portions of text unaccounted for (e.g. Gen 18:6 in his analysis of 18:1–10). While symmetric structures may sometimes be orthogonal to syntactic ones, careful analysis will note and discuss such anomalies. The redundancy of language extends to its structure, and the most persuasive analyses can be supported from multiple directions. Another trap is seeing deliberate repetition in features that could hardly fail to correspond. His analysis of several Ugaritic patterns makes much of the use of whole numbers, whether in the number of people (225) or the categories of goods (235) taken on a journey, or the number of countries conquered (259). Repeated use of a given number (such as three, or seven, or ten) might be remarkable, but except in traumatic cases, people, categories, and countries come only in discrete units. The fact that a traveler has a whole number of traveling companions says more about the viability of partial persons than about literary dependence.

Among the arguments that Avishur draws from his analyses, two will be of special interest to readers of *JETS*. First, he commonly asserts that the Biblical patterns are derived from Ugaritic ones. It is one thing to agree that a Biblical text and a Canaanite myth share common literary forms, but quite another to determine whether one is prior to the other (and, if so, which) or whether both are formed by a shared linguistic culture. Such claims are methodologically ill founded without a much wider survey of these techniques, for instance in Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature.

Second, he frequently draws literary-critical conclusions from his analysis. On one hand, he argues from the overall symmetry of Gen 18:1–16 that the text should not be divided into two sources. On the other hand, failing to find a place for v. 11, he concludes that it is an addition by a later redactor. Given the subjectivity of his analytical techniques and the limited repertoire of structural techniques that he recognizes, both sorts of conclusions are extremely tenuous. A thoroughgoing structure analysis that incorporates syntactic and semantic as well as symmetric considerations can raise serious questions about cavalier scissors-and-tape theories of textual origins, but superimposition of a chiasmic structure that ignores stretches of text and runs counter to syntactic structures will hardly dissuade an inherent prejudice against the integrity of the text. By the same token, structural repetition is almost always associated with variation, including digressions and amplifications that are marked with their own struc-



tural devices, and a preconceived structural unity is as shaky a foundation for textual excision as is a preconceived theological consistency. Structure is not irrelevant to textual questions, but persuasive arguments require a more refined and comprehensive theory of structure than the simplistic chiasms mapped by Avishur.

A structural approach to the Bible is particularly attractive to evangelicals because it encourages the reader to view the text holistically and contextually. Avishur's analyses are valuable starting points for such analysis. Unfortunately, he has been unable to avoid entirely the trap that he himself notes in conclusion: "sophistry lurks behind this kind of exegesis which may impede the ability to distinguish an explanation arising out of the writing itself from the specious reasoning that stems from the reflections of the interpreter" (p. 288).

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*Judaism and Hellenism in Antiquity: Conflict or Confluence?* By Lee I. Levine.  
Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999, 227 pp., n.p.

Dominant cultures have held sway over large transnational territories during various times in human history. One could make a very strong case for America being one of those dominant cultures, with portents of a world culture in the wings. Hellenism—largely Greek with touches of Roman influence—certainly dominated its era and has had a significant impact down to today.

Hellenization describes how the dominant culture was localized. Levine helps pull together the impact mainly Jewish scholars have found of Hellenization, mainly in the area of archaeology. Throughout the book he is fighting an older school of thought. "There are those who claim that Jewish life has survived intact and vibrant throughout the ages—despite persecution, exile, and discrimination—precisely because the Jews succeeded in maintaining their own particularistic ways, refusing to accommodate any foreign patterns of thinking and behavior." He concedes this, but concludes, "There is certainly some truth in this claim; however, it is only a partial truth, which when taken alone is, in effect, a distortion of the whole" (pp. 183–84).

Maintaining the view that Palestine, as the crossroads of civilization, could not have possibly remained uninfluenced by larger culture, Levine examines Hellenism's impact on Judaism from its outset through the second-temple period, the development of rabbinic Judaism within the Roman-Byzantine era, and as the ancient synagogue evolved. Building styles, funeral rites, literary influences and other "outside" forces did indeed impact Judaism as it developed.

The Hasmonean coins bore Greek inscriptions. As Levine notes, "The Hasmonean rulers appear to have lived comfortably within the Hellenistic and Jewish worlds and this is the message they wished to convey to their people via their coins, one of the most public vehicles at their disposal" (p. 43).

Ossuaries, widely used by Romans, came into use by Jews in Palestine during the 100 years before the destruction of 70 CE. Decorative and inscribed, more than 2000 of these stone burial boxes have been found in and around Jerusalem. Some of them bear Hebrew inscriptions, others both Greek and Hebrew inscriptions (p. 64).

Levine would argue that while Jewish motifs and Biblical themes dominate Jewish synagogues, one does find an occasional zodiac mosaic or other pagan or neutral symbols in late antiquity. Scholars argue as to the importance of this symbolic representation, some even wondering if this is an effort to fit in or incorporate outside ideas (p. 153).

The development of rabbinic Judaism shows marked “outside” influence. Levine presents evidence of an “overwhelming impact of the outside world on every conceivable aspect of ancient Judaism” (p. 111). At one point he speaks of Jewish civilization as a “river that widens and increases its capacity as it flows toward the sea” (p. 183).

The style of the Greek forum had an effect upon the style of the Jewish synagogue, which in turn impacted church architecture, which in turn influenced synagogue construction. Cultures impact cultures when they are neighbors. No one can deny that Judaism remains distinct. Levine does not challenge its uniqueness, just the notion that Judaism has remained in a protective cocoon, without borrowing or being influenced by the world around it. He does an excellent job of showing the ways in which ancient Judaism was touched by Hellenization. We see it on the micro level, the local synagogue and burial ground, as well as on the macro level, literary genres, political and cultural institutions.

Levine not only shows a command of his subject but writes in a way that should not leave a novice in the dust, bewildered by archaeological and literary terminology. This may be why Hendrickson has chosen to pick up this book, originally published by the University of Washington Press. This volume would help any Christian see the impact that Hellenism had on ancient Judaism.

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*The Old Testament and the Significance of Jesus: Embracing Change—Maintaining Christian Identity: The Emerging Center of Biblical Scholarship.* By Fredrick C. Holmgren. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, xviii + 204 pp., \$16.00.

The apostle Paul wrote that he preached Christ as a scandal to the Jews. In spite of his efforts to avoid offense, Paul found that his message offended his fellow Jews. Holmgren and others, some 1950 years later, are trying to reinterpret Paul in order to avoid the offense that he himself could not. Holmgren enters into a pluralistic dialogue with Jewish Biblical scholars with the goal of communicating his Christian faith without causing offense. Both his effort and the dialogue are very appreciated and there is much here that should inform Biblical scholars of areas of needed change. There do exist anti-Semitic interpretations of the Bible, and scholars must be conscientious of these interpretations in order to improve the dialogue between Christians and Jews.

Holmgren is right to correct a traditional approach to the OT that applies the “prediction-fulfillment” model as if the OT was only a source of predictions totally completed directly in the NT. Even the “promise-fulfillment” model partly maintains the same failure. The OT must be read within its own context and then only afterwards the scholar may appreciate the use of the OT within different groups of Judaism. Jewish Christians in the first century AD interpreted the OT with similar methods as other Jews did. However, Holmgren is a little simplistic in this discussion of distinct Jewish and Christian views toward the use of the OT in the NT. He lacks an awareness of the “pattern-fulfillment” model. He also lacks an appreciation that there are very distinct hermeneutical methods among NT authors. Not all NT interpretations of the OT follow the Jewish methods of midrash. Also there do exist some futuristic prophecies in the OT that many scholars, both Jewish and Christian, understand as messianic. These instances are examples of the “prediction-fulfillment” model.

Holmgren is right to correct the traditional anti-Semitic interpretation that the Jews were historically great sinners who deserved the judgment of God. Jews pre-

served the stories of the sins of their predecessors because it was their process of self-evaluation. The Bible is not a story of great sinners but a story of people with a great ability to repent in order to avoid repeating past errors. Holmgren is also right that there is a continuation of the OT Law in the NT, especially in Matthew. Further, Holmgren is right that Paul maintains a future for Israel, or for Jews (Romans 9–11). However, Holmgren argues that the future of Israel is distinct from the future of the Church and that “salvation” (in spite of the soteriological promises in Romans) does not mean a “salvation” (in spite of the soteriological promises in Romans) as Paul understands it in other parts of Romans. For Holmgren, the Jews will accept Jesus as Messiah and be saved. However, they will not be united with the only true people of God, the body of Christ. Apparently, for Holmgren, it is not anti-Semitic to argue that future Jews will accept Jesus as Messiah. It is anti-Semitic, however, to argue that there is only one true people of God that will come to completion when the nation of Israel is brought back into the Church and is saved in the Christian understanding of salvation. I think that both declarations would be equally offensive to Jews today.

There are several ahistorical statements in the book. Holmgren claims that there are anti-Semitic aspects in the NT, especially the Pauline views that the Church is the new Israel and that Christians are heirs of the promises given to Israel. However, how can Holmgren charge Paul with anti-Semitism? It would be more historical to recognize that the first century AD was full of competing groups of Jews, many of which claimed to be the representative of the true remnant of Israel. It would be equally ahistorical to claim that the Qumran community was anti-Semitic when they condemned the rest of Judaism as illegitimate. Jewish Christians in the first century AD were not anti-Semitic when they wished to include all humanity within their messianic community.

Finally, Holmgren tries to reinterpret the creeds of the Church in order to make them more acceptable to Jews. He argues that the great creeds were in error in their claim for the divinity of Jesus and for the Trinity. According to Holmgren, the NT did not declare that Jesus was the God of Israel of the OT, but that Jesus was the divine wisdom of God. If Christianity could speak of Jesus in terms of the great Jewish wisdom poetry, then both religions could enter into a better dialogue, according to Holmgren. However, it is ahistorical to argue that Jesus was considered only the divine wisdom of God by the early Church. Some NT passages of a high Christological nature could be interpreted within an understanding of divine wisdom, but not all. Even if one argues that some of these passages are better dated to the second century, they must be accepted as representing a belief by that time in the full divinity of Jesus, which still predates the time of the great creeds.

Holmgren claims that the later Church was influenced by Greek thought in that the earlier high Christology of the primitive church became more ontological (Jesus equals God) rather than the simple Jewish-Christian praise of the God of the OT for having revealed divine wisdom by means of the human person Jesus. However, it is difficult to accept this evaluation of NT Christology as if it was originally written without Greek thinking in the primitive era. The NT was also written to a Greek audience, not just a Jewish one. Would not Hellenists have understood the high Christology of the NT ontologically in the first century rather than three centuries later? If the high Christology of the NT was capable of an ontological interpretation (Jesus is the κύριος, the God of the OT), then what prevented that understanding in the first century by Hellenistic Jewish-Christian audiences?

Holmgren is right that a better dialogue is necessary, but it is equally necessary that both religions avoid negating the most basic beliefs of the other. A true dialogue occurs when both religions understand and appreciate these basic beliefs rather than

force the other to change. Changes undoubtedly will occur based upon the weight of the evidence that each religion gives as a basis for its beliefs, but such change should never be forced. It is possible that Jews today are still offended that Christians maintain a high ontological Christology, but Jews in the first century were also offended by the high Christology of Paul. Rather than reinterpret Paul to avoid the implications of his high Christology, it would be better to observe the great efforts that this first-century Jew made to avoid being anti-Semitic and to follow his example.

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*Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method.*  
By Sidney Greidanus. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, 373 pp., \$22.00 paper.

In this work, Sidney Greidanus has offered once again a thoroughly useful tool to the seminary curriculum. However, Greidanus has now narrowed his focus to the theme that was only touched upon in his *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. This theme is the subject of preaching Christ. Moreover, he seeks to define this in the context of preaching from the OT. In the course of the work, Greidanus seeks to speak to a number of issues of practical hermeneutical and homiletical concern. Two fundamental questions are brought into complementary theological dialogue: (1) The question of preaching from the OT in the modern Church, and (2) the use of OT as a witness to Christ.

The book is marked by a very natural progression in thought. While not formally broken into two parts, the book may be usefully viewed in this way. The first four chapters deal with the subject in both a theoretical and historical theological way. The first two specifically concern the problem and justification for preaching Christ from the OT. Here Greidanus addresses the problem of the silence of the OT in the modern pulpit. Many will find these pages especially refreshing in light of current trends. The third and fourth chapters give a brief history of preaching Christ from the OT covering primarily the patristic and reformation periods. Chapter 5 seems to be a transition into the methodological portion of the book where he surveys some basic NT principles for preaching Christ. Chapters 6–8 then further develop the methodological principles previously discussed.

Though grounding his arguments for preaching Christ from the OT upon a well-established continuum of Church fathers and prominent Reformers, the book is by no means a credulous return to precritical methods. Greidanus happily gleans the wisdom of our antecedents while displaying his characteristic attentiveness to historical-critical, literary, and canonical methodologies. It seems safe to say that this work presupposes a sound understanding of his principles outlined in his *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text*. A major strength of this book is that it simultaneously implies that just as one cannot preach from the OT as if Christ has not come, neither can the modern preacher preach Christ as if the Church and its interpretive skills have not matured. It is, therefore, a historically and literarily matured Christocentric method that he seems to be aiming to develop.

The reader should be aware, however, that this work is not a mere technical and methodological primer for homiletics. Rather, Greidanus has offered a reflective Biblical theology of preaching the OT accompanied by practical methodological considerations. His work stands firmly upon his covenantal and redemptive-historical theological tradition. One of the great ideas that this work impresses upon the reader is that (although not so explicitly stated) one's homiletics is inseparable from his

hermeneutics. Whether the reader agrees with Greidanus's theological presuppositions or not, there is a refreshing underlying message that the task of the common preacher is no less than a theological one.

In dealing with the Church fathers, Greidanus first addresses the Alexandrian school (allegorical) versus the Antiochene school (typological). In this comparison he addresses the so-called "four-fold" sense of interpreting Scriptures (literal, allegorical, moral [tropological], and anagogical). As we might expect, he levels serious criticism against the "four-fold" sense, focusing his attack upon allegorical and tropological (moral) uses of Scripture.

In contrast to such methods, Greidanus's approach takes him elsewhere. In chap. 6 he proposes a "Christocentric" method, suggesting seven tools that may be employed by the preacher: (1) redemptive-historical progression, (2) promise-fulfillment, (3) typology (though very qualified), (4) analogy (also qualified), (5) longitudinal themes, (6) NT references, and (7) contrast. One of the strengths of this approach is that it is not a highly systemized method that would be prone to strong-arm the text. The collection of these approaches leaves him relaxed enough to admit that for some texts one or two would be totally inappropriate, several more may yield only little fruit, while others may be well suited and abundant.

A particularly impressive development is his discussion of analogy. With this method, the preacher is not looking for anything specific or prophetic pointing to Christ, but merely observes the relational pattern of how God deals with his people in the OT and its similarity to God's work in Christ. Preachers and teachers will probably find this point very helpful and yet naturally respectful of historical context.

Chapters 7–8 put it all together. While chap. 7 describes how to compose a Christ-centered sermon, chap. 8 goes on to make a comparison and contrast between this method and allegorical method. This last chapter is useful in that it walks the reader through the process of evaluating what good and bad use of OT narrative looks like.

In spite of all the commendable strengths of this work, two criticisms are worthy of note. First, while we recognize the methodological superiority of his seven points to the *quatrigo* and greatly appreciate the critical reflection he has brought to bear on the subject, his method is not fully immune to similar abuse. Greidanus is not absolutely clear, but it does seem that he is saying "every text" must somehow be a witness to Christ. Thus, his seven methods could theoretically also be turned into a more sophisticated grab-bag of homiletical tools to *make* every text "witness to Christ." This begins to show itself in his suggestion that one must preach wisdom literature "redemptive-historically" in spite of the common consensus that Israel's wisdom traditions are rooted rather in a theology of creation. So our problem is not with a Christocentric method, but the degree to which it is applied in various texts.

Second, and related to the first point, there seems to be a strong aversion to ethical content in preaching displayed in the work. In various places throughout, he makes strong comments about "ethical preaching" and "moralism." We certainly agree that preaching is far more than ethics and that moralistic preaching is an easy tap for the common preacher. However, Greidanus himself seems somewhat adverse to granting OT narrative much of a moral voice in spite of the strong moral bent in so much of Hebrew narrative. (This is very much in keeping with his previous work *Sola Scriptura: Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts*.) To bring the significance of these two criticisms into sharper focus, one might ask how one would employ his high Christological method and his passé stance toward ethics for preaching a text like Proverbs 31 and do proper justice to it.

In conclusion, Greidanus's work comes highly recommended overall. Its strengths far outweigh its shortcomings. The simultaneous appeal for both a revival in Christ-centered preaching and the voice of the OT in the Church is both timely and inspiring.

Above all, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament* is a profound step in the direction the Church and her preachers need to be moving.

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*Christ in the Old Testament: Old Testament Appearances of Christ in Human Form.* By James A. Borland. Revised and expanded edition. Ross-shire: Mentor, 1999, 184 pp.

This work is a republication and revision of an earlier edition by the same title, published in 1978 by Moody Press. The thesis of Borland's work is stated in the introduction: "that all Old Testament theophanies that involved the manifestation of God in human form were appearances of the second person of the Trinity, and as such their purpose was not only to provide immediate revelation but also to prepare mankind for the incarnation of Christ" (p. 11).

In the first of the book's five chapters, Borland defines the term *Christophany* in such a way as to distinguish it from other revelatory phenomena such as dreams, visions, the pillar of cloud, the Shekinah glory, and from the incarnation. According to Borland, *Christophany* refers to "those unsought, intermittent and temporary, visible and audible manifestations of God the Son in human form, by which God communicated something to certain conscious human beings on earth prior to the birth of Jesus" (p. 17). Obviously, this definition itself establishes the parameters for which data will be considered or excluded, minimizing the need actually to prove his thesis. However, he does seek to establish each of the components of this definition from the relevant Old Testament texts. In the second chapter he convincingly argues that these Christophanies, including those designated as "the angel of the Lord" (a phrase which Borland subsequently renders as "the Messenger [or Angel] of *Jehovah*" [emphasis mine], curious in that otherwise all Scripture quoted is from the King James Version) were indeed appearances of *God*. In the third chapter he offers suggestions as to the theological purposes prompting God to reveal himself in Christophanic form, and identifies several values in studying Christophanies. In the very brief concluding chapter he explains that "[t]he primary purpose of this work has been to clarify the biblical data relating to God's human-form theophanies in the Old Testament" (p. 119). Appendix 1 briefly details the history of interpretation of Christophanies, appendix 2 presents his case for why Melchizedek should not be considered a Christophany, and appendix 3 draws out some practical, devotional lessons from five Christophanic passages.

The book is well organized, truly exemplary in its chapter introductions and clear, concise summaries. It is thorough in its treatment, and for the most part reflects sound interpretive judgments while addressing this largely overlooked topic.

The revised work is disappointing in several ways, however. There are numerous errors in the vowel pointing of Hebrew words and in the transliterated Biblical words. More significantly, the lexicography is quite outdated. The author looks to Girdlestone (2nd edition, 1897) more frequently than BDB for OT terms, and ignores altogether the more current works of *TWOT*, *TDOT*, Jenni, or Van Gemeren. The bibliography generally is also quite dated, with far more references from the 1800s than from the period of 1975–1999. Indeed, though it is announced as a revised edition, there are only two paragraphs (pp. 75 and 78) and one footnote (p. 85, n. 50) that offer critical engagement with any work since 1975, the chief revision of this edition being the addition of the new, devotional third appendix (where the author also switches to the *NKJV*). He also tends to speak in dismissive or derogatory terms about those not holding conservative views, resulting in somewhat caricatured portrayals.

In summary, the need for such a book is apparent. Borland has presented some very clear, well-reasoned arguments, but alas, it appears that the revised edition clearly needs to be revised to be effective for future scholars.

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*Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God.* Edited by Carey C. Newman. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999, 320 pp., \$22.99 paper.

N. T. Wright's magisterial series, *Christian Origins and the Question of God*, is perhaps the most creative and important project in NT theology since Bultmann's. That it comes during a period of renewed interest in historical Jesus research and following on the heels of a number of highly publicized releases from the Jesus Seminar calls even more attention to it. One measure of the significance of Wright's project is the recent publication of a book about one of his books. In *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel: A Critical Assessment of N. T. Wright's Jesus and the Victory of God*, a collection of essays focusing on Wright's understanding of Jesus, as outlined in *Jesus and the Victory of God* (*JVG*), editor Carey C. Newman fields an all-star lineup of contemporary scholarship. No doubt this also highlights the importance of Wright's project.

*Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* is neither an evangelical apologetic nor a meeting of the N. T. Wright fan club. In addition to evangelicals, Newman wisely includes scholars who hold differing theological convictions and opinions concerning the historical Jesus. Readers will find several essays by authors who have disagreed with Wright at points in the past (Dale Allison, Marcus Borg, and Luke Timothy Johnson). *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* also includes essays by a renowned historical theologian (Alister McGrath) and a respected evangelical philosopher (C. Stephen Evans). This adds a much-needed dimension to the book, given that historical Jesus research has too often been primarily, if not exclusively, the domain of Biblical specialists.

The book is divided into two major sections, sandwiched between the introduction and conclusion by Newman. The first section, "Assessment," makes up the bulk of the book (208 pages). This section consists of several essays that mostly describe certain aspects of Wright's presentation of Jesus in *JVG*, offering only a brief critique (Craig Bromberg, Paul R. Eddy, and Darrell Bock), along with others that mostly critique or defend Wright's position on one point or another (Klyne R. Snodgrass, Craig Evans, and Allison). In addition several essays in this section are at least reflections on, if not responses to, Wright's work (Richard Hays, McGrath, Evans, and Johnson). One is left wondering what the criteria were for distinguishing between a response and an assessment. The second section, "Responses," consists of Borg's "appreciative disagreement" with Wright followed by Wright's response to the authors.

One repeatedly finds the authors discussing Wright's treatment of eschatology and apocalyptic language as well as his contention that most first-century Jews believed that Israel had not yet fully returned from exile. Two essays in particular focus on these issues. In "Jesus and the Victory of Apocalyptic," Dale Allison expresses his disagreement with Wright concerning what Jesus' end-time language means. Craig Evans, on the other hand, devotes most of his essay, "Jesus and the Continuing Exile of Israel," to defending Wright's thesis concerning the exile of Israel.

The best section of the book is Wright's response. At points he is quite critical of several authors. He clearly believes that some have misunderstood him. It may be the case that Wright has himself to blame for some of this. At times he paints in broad

verbal strokes and at others he uses a very fine brush. This leads to a work that is both rhapsodic and technical. One can easily get lost in Wright's soaring prose and miss the subtleties of meaning within his work. Whatever the reason, Wright helpfully clarifies his position at several points in his response. His distinction between history as writing ("history-W") and history as event ("history-E") is quite helpful. His discussion of the abductive nature of historical research and the difference between "literal" and "metaphorical" as well as "concrete" and "abstract" is both helpful and insightful. The result is a very helpful chapter that certainly furthered my understanding of what Wright intends to accomplish. We can thank the book's authors for pushing Wright to respond in this way.

Blomberg and Eddy offer useful introductory essays on *JVG* as a whole and who Wright thinks the historical Jesus was, respectively, for those approaching Wright's work for the first time. Likewise Richard Hays and Alister McGrath contribute thoughtful articles that reflect on the significance of Wright's Jesus for ethics and theology, respectively. C. Stephen Evans addresses Wright at the level where Wright's work must ultimately be addressed: the methodological. Unfortunately Evans chooses to address the issue of methodological naturalism rather than the more important issue of hermeneutics. One is left wishing for a discussion of Wright's philosophy of language (is there not something that at least somewhat resembles speech-act theory at points in Wright's approach?). Nevertheless Evans is to be commended for seeing the importance of method.

One weakness of the book is that it focuses upon *JVG*, and excludes Wright's first volume, *The New Testament and the People of God (NTPG)*, even though several authors refer readers to *NTPG*. The earlier volume is foundational for all that follows. The material in *NTPG* is more difficult and theoretical than that in *JVG* but those who neglect it do so at their own peril. Among the relevant issues that could have been treated had the book focused on Wright's complete project to date rather than on one volume of it are Wright's choice of critical realism as his operating epistemology, his use of A. J. Greimas's narratology, and perhaps even his understanding of the nature of Biblical authority. It is surprising that so few systematic theologians have written concerning the implications of Wright's project. Does that mean theologians are not reading NT theology these days?

*Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* reminds one of the collected essays edited by Jeffrey Carlson and Robert A. Ludwig, *Jesus and Faith: A Conversation on the Work of John Dominic Crossan* (Orbis, 1994). Yet there are significant differences. The authors in *Jesus and Faith* often use Crossan's work as a runway from which to take off on their own flights of fancy. In addition one gets the feeling that there is no real substantive disagreement between Crossan and the majority of his dialogue partners. This is not the case with *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel*. The essays in Newman's collection point the reader to Wright's work rather than to their own opinions. Furthermore, although all the authors admire and respect Wright, there also is genuine, heartfelt disagreement at points. The book is much the better for this.

The target audience for this book is probably seminary students, although there is much that may prove useful to the specialist in these essays as well. This book is not a text, but it is a resource. It will not take the place of reading Wright (nor is it intended to), but it does offer the reader who is coming to feast at Wright's table for the first time a glance at the menu ahead of time. In doing so, it may further whet one's appetite for what Wright has to offer. In other words, it will prove useful to those who are trying to get some feel for what Wright is doing without reading through the nearly 1200 pages of *NTPG* and *JVG*. It may also serve to encourage those who are questioning whether or not they have the appetite for such a heady course to dig in. Having said that, one must remember that Wright's project is only one-third completed. It may



well be that he will yet surprise us all. Newman's collection is well rounded and useful. As such it should find its way onto the shelves of all who are interested in historical Jesus research.

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*Jesus and the Rise of Christianity.* By Paul Barnett. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999, 448 pages, \$29.99.

To endeavor to write a NT history is to fortify oneself for a journey over turbulent waters. In his Presidential address to the Cambridge Theological Society in 1983 titled "The Last Taboo: The Self-Consciousness of Jesus," John A. T. Robinson pointed out that every generation of students inherits from its predecessor certain "no go" areas. The writing of NT history has perhaps been one for our generation. Several forces have converged to make these seas inhospitable, among them the multiplication of divergent methodologies and hesitation over the very idea of a NT canon. While mindful of the dangers, Paul Barnett has nonetheless set his face against the prevailing winds and written a fine book.

Like the Gospel of John, the aim of Barnett's book is most clearly expressed near the end: "I have not sought to offer a doctrinally motivated apologetic for the accuracy of these texts but to argue for the intrinsically historical and concrete nature of Jesus himself" (pp. 415–16). This claim to have donned the mantle of historian *qua* historian must be tested. Nevertheless, his thesis, stated variously throughout the book, is sound. The most plausible explanation for the phenomenon of the early church is the life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus is, in Barnett's words, the "engine" that drives NT history.

In defending this thesis he relies especially on the letters of Paul. He points out that Paul's correspondence is studded with references to the faith, the church of God, a commemorative meal, and to a recognized body of teaching, all of which Paul claims to have received soon after his conversion. Paul must be telling the truth, reasons Barnett, or his adversaries would have been quick to seize upon each infelicity. "The spread of evidence across the letters points to a common and early tradition. Did the early church generate this tradition, or . . . did it derive from Jesus?" (p. 173). This is a legitimate historical question. Barnett's answer appears quite sensible. The brief gap between Jesus and the conversion of Paul makes it highly unlikely that the portrait of Jesus Paul was taught was anything but true to the historical Jesus. Paul's estimate of Jesus, for instance, comports nicely with the theology bound up with the Son of Man sayings the Gospels place on the lips of Jesus, even though Paul never uses the term. The result is a book similar in argument to C. H. Dodd's deceptively slender volume *According to the Scriptures*.

Barnett is capable of enviable historical work. He has an eye for fertile but underexploited historical detail and is generally sober in judgment. The intricacies of Roman provincial taxation dizzy even the expert. Barnett chooses the path of restraint, adroitly avoiding the pitfall of saying more than the evidence will allow. He is similarly balanced and careful on the matter of pseudepigraphical writings relative to the NT.

But Barnett's eye for historical accuracy is not unblinking. At times the feeling grows that his judgments are, in fact, doctrinally motivated. The book wavers on the matter of the handling of divergent traditions in the Gospels. John is trusted with reference to the date of the crucifixion without revealing that the Synoptics speak with

a decidedly different voice. Luke-Acts is followed concerning the coming of the Spirit without a nod to John's contrary rendering (20:22). Yet concerning the birth of Jesus Barnett explicitly points to divergent accounts as evidence of historical verisimilitude. This makes it appear as if texts are chosen to suit a preconceived purpose.

Like the NT, Barnett's book is dominated by Jesus and Paul, although he is to be admired for placing others on this crowded canvas. The first part of the book consists of two chapters concerned with historical method and the NT, particularly the role the historical Jesus must have played. These are followed by two chapters on background issues (Hellenism, Herod) and four chapters on the career of Jesus, including a treatment of the resurrection and the coming of the Spirit. Three chapters on the Jerusalem church appear next, highlighting the roles of Peter and Stephen. The remaining eight chapters comprise discussions of Paul, the Gospels in the context of unfolding NT history, Revelation, including one chapter on the three "pillars" of the church besides Paul (James, Cephas, John). This portion of the book is concerned with the typical problems (the dating of Galatians), but also pauses to offer intriguing insights (the simmering effects of the crisis instigated by Caligula). The first part of the book is perhaps more interesting, as it is here that Barnett buttresses his thesis. But it also sparkles with *divertimenti* (e.g. the origin of the Sanhedrin, and implications of the name *Nazareth*).

The book is clearly organized and written in pellucid if uninspired prose. Today the approach is novel, but in Barnett's hands it is not without its difficulties. In his desire to prove his thesis he can shortchange the significance of the very events he chronicles. He also has a curious penchant for repeating the details of the same event. The too-slender treatment of Jesus' attitude toward the nations is surprising, given the thesis of the book. Barnett is open about his meager estimate of the value of the sociological approach to the NT, but it is precisely at such junctures that the clearest examples of a doctrinal tone are evident. This attitude also means that certain significant questions (e.g. just why did people convert to Christianity anyway?) are never asked. The usual typographical blunders can be found, but these are minimal in number.

We should not allow our eyes to linger overlong on the few imperfections, for these are far outweighed by the strengths of the book. Apart from the occasional positivist who may be lurking about, none of us believes anymore that a Rankean history (history without presuppositions or bias; history "as it actually happened") is possible. E. H. Carr's *What is History?* taught us this, as Barnett well knows. He also knows that the current climate presumes a bias against his project. For this reason the book is unlikely to prove convincing to either the historian committed to a non-doctrinal posture, or to the modern disciple of Wrede who doubts the value of the historical-Jesus enterprise. This is a pity, for the book is a solid achievement marked by sober historical investigation. It deserves placement in the libraries of pastors and teachers, where it will prove a valued addition.

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*Jesus the Miracle Worker: A Historical and Theological Study.* By Graham H. Twelftree. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999, 470 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Graham Twelftree, senior pastor of North Eastern Vineyard Church in Adelaide, Australia, and author of the fine book *Jesus the Exorcist*, has written a densely packed, carefully documented, and persuasively argued study of Jesus' miracles and their important—though astonishingly neglected—bearing on historical Jesus stud-

ies. Twelftree intends for the book to be a “straightforward study” that is both historical and theological for both the specialist and the general reader (p. 13). Besides making this “bold claim,” he also “takes the discussion of the Gospel miracle traditions into the arena of the quest for the historical Jesus” (p. 13). As one looks at the abundant scholarly endorsements on the cover of Twelftree’s recent work, one repeatedly sees plaudits such as “valuable contribution,” “significant contribution,” or “important addition.” And indeed it is!

Twelftree sets forth four objectives. He seeks to identify (a) how the Gospel writers understood Jesus’ miracles; (b) how Jesus most likely understood them (these two objectives are covered through part 3); (c) to what extent the miracle stories reflect “what actually happened”; and (d) what the implications are for the quest for the historical Jesus (covered in the book’s final parts). In light of these objectives, the subject matter happens to fall into five disproportionate parts (the second part alone is 183 pages in length).

Part 1 (“Miracles and the Modern Mind”) is a brief, but excellent, introduction to the theological and philosophical discussion of miracles. Twelftree notes that with the exception of J. Meier, the “little place . . . given to discussions of miracles” in years past and currently by Third Questers is “staggering” (p. 19). But given the profusion of Jesus’ miracles and their deep significance for his ministry, any adequate understanding of the historical Jesus “must include” a substantial treatment of his miracles (p. 20).

Twelftree discusses various attempted definitions of miracle and is drawn toward R. Swinburne’s: “An event of an extraordinary kind, brought about by a god, and of religious significance.” He then proceeds to discuss the views of “two monumental figures”—D. F. Strauss and R. Bultmann—and then addresses various philosophical and theological objections to miracles (“miracles are incoherent”; “miracles violate natural laws”; or “the modern secular has no place for miracles”). Twelftree cogently deals with these common—sometimes naïve and dogmatic—arguments and clears the way for the intellectual possibility of miracles.

Part 2 (“The Miracles of Jesus in the Gospels”) goes into detail about each of the miracles in each of the gospels (beginning with the earliest period, Mark). Though not offering a full-blown commentary on each miracle story, Twelftree elucidates the subtleties and nuances of these miracles and shows how they contribute to the unique theological and pastoral emphases of each evangelist. For example, Mark sees Jesus’ ministry of *both* teaching and miracles as important to understanding who Jesus is (pp. 59, 61) whereas Matthew sets forth Jesus’ teaching as preeminent above the miracles (p. 140); Luke, however, follows Mark’s emphasis, balancing and inextricably linking Jesus’ teaching and miracles (p. 146). For John, miracles are more central—the “centerpiece” of Jesus’ activities prior to the cross (p. 236).

In this section we read such things as Mark’s mention of two similar feedings—crowds of 4,000 and 5,000—the former being Gentile in setting and emphasis while the latter is “unmistakably Jewish” (p. 69). Or take Matthew’s recounting of the Jesus’ walking on the water (Matt 14:22–33): Jesus, who had gone off by himself to pray, was separated from the disciples on the storm-tossed lake. The pastoral lesson Matthew may be drawing out is “no matter how distant the Son of God may seem, he is still able to save the church when it is being buffeted by the storms of persecution or affliction” (p. 130).

Since Jesus’ miracles are “so significant for Luke”—and for John—and since “so many issues are involved,” Twelftree devotes two chapters to the Lucan miracles and two to the Johannine (the chapters for each gospel are subtitled, “The Stories” and “The Issues”). While in Luke, Jesus’ reliance on the Spirit is emphasized, in John it is on the Father. John is unique in that no exorcisms are recounted. The seven “signs”

Jesus performs are intended to reveal God's glory (p. 224). Both John and Luke especially recognize the ambiguity of Jesus' miracles.

Part 3 ("Jesus & the Miracles") deals with historical analysis. One of the chapters therein (chap. 9) approaches questions regarding what we can know of the past (rejecting naïve positivism and phenomenism in favor of critical realism) and historical method (e.g., burden of proof, demonstration) and criteria to determine historicity (e.g. multiple attestation, dissimilarity, coherence). Twelftree evenhandedly discusses these matters, laying out the particular merits, problems, and ambiguities involved. He then goes on to deal with the meaning of the miracles for Jesus (chap. 10). Twelftree notes that Jesus saw his miracles in large part as a battle with the demonic and, concomitantly, as an expression of the realization of God's kingdom in the face of Satan's defeat (p. 263), and his exorcisms *in themselves* were expressions of eschatological salvation (pp. 270–71). While Jesus in some ways resembled the Jewish miracle workers of his day (e.g. using saliva), he was distinct in his authority (e.g. he *commanded*— rather than *prayed for*—healing/exorcism: he raised the *dead*, which was assumed to be God's prerogative).

Part 4 treats Jesus' miracles according to various categories (exorcism, crippled and paralytics, raising the dead, cleansing of lepers, other healings and miracles of nature) and tracks the historical core of these stories. For example, the pool of Bethesda in John 5, where the paralytic was healed, has been unearthed, indicating that John has given us accurate details; thus, a late or non-Palestinian origin of this story is precluded (p. 297). In this part, Twelftree shows how with varying degrees of confidence, "the vast majority of Gospel miracle stories can be traced back to those who witnessed and reported about the ministry of the historical Jesus" (p. 330). Historically speaking, we have good reason to accept these reports as being of genuine miracles. And even if the available historical data for some miracles are too few to pronounce their historicity with the same degree of confidence (and this intellectual humility is required), this still does not mean these stories do not reflect actual miraculous events. It only means our historical sources are less optimal than we would wish (pp. 328–29). The upshot of the section is this: we cannot do justice to the historical Jesus unless we see him as much a miracle worker as a teacher and one who died and was raised from the dead.

Part 5 summarizes the miracles of Jesus in the Gospels and how the evangelists and Jesus himself understood these miracles. The "most obvious" thread throughout the Gospels is that "*the miracles of Jesus reveal his identity, as God himself at work; indeed, God is encountered in the miracles*" (p. 343). At the very end of this section, Twelftree offers a concise discussion of the three "Quests." He singles out E. Sanders, M. Borg, and J. Crossan as exemplifying the tendency to overlook the miracles of Jesus as a major component in reconstructing the historical Jesus.

Twelftree has done admirably in presenting just such a corrective, and we are in his debt for this magnificent treatment of the intricate and intrinsic relationship of Gospel miracles to the historical Jesus.

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*The Meaning of Jesus: Two Visions.* By Marcus J. Borg and N. T. Wright. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1999, 288 pp., \$24.00.

N. T. Wright and Marcus Borg—both former students of the late G. B. Caird—always make for an engaging read. This co-authored face-off between them—which

“has grown out of a friendship” (p. vii)—on the sweep of questions pertaining to the historical Jesus makes this book even more of an attraction. Wright, who once taught at Oxford and is presently Canon Theologian of Westminster Abbey, presents a more “traditionalist” Christian perspective on the historical Jesus (p. ix)—with his unique twists and turns; Borg, who is the Hundere Distinguished Professor of Religion at Oregon State University, presents a “revisionist” vision of Christianity (p. ix)—even though such labels are, by the authors’ admission, overstated and even potentially misleading.

Wright and Borg admit that they are far from being neutral and unbiased scholars (p. viii). On the other hand, both strongly believe that the subject of Jesus is not a private one, but belongs “in the public world of historical and cross-cultural study” (p. ix). They frankly declare that “we have both frequently been puzzled, and even disturbed, by some of what the other has said” (p. viii), but cowriting a book has helped Wright and Borg to understand each other much better. This book is, among other things, an attempt to get past many of the log-jammed debates between “conservative” and “liberal” Christianity and to “advance an ecumenical dialogue that is often ignored” (p. ix).

The book is in eight parts, each of which contains an essay by Borg and Wright on a given topic. These parts are broken down as follows: I. “How Do We Know About Jesus?”; II. “What Did Jesus Do and Teach?”; III. “The Death of Jesus”; IV. “‘God Raised Jesus from the Dead’”; V. “Was Jesus God?”; VI. “The Birth of Jesus”; VII. “‘He Will Come Again in Glory’”; VIII. “Jesus and the Christian Life” (which is a very useful and engaging discussion that tends to be overlooked in the historical-Jesus debate). As this book is difficult to summarize briefly in a section-by-section manner, I shall dispense with these breakdowns and list some of the book’s nuggets.

According to Borg, the Gospels (written between AD 70 and 100) are part of a developing tradition—a point with which evangelicals can agree, though with qualifications. However, because of this development, Borg thinks it safe only to affirm Jesus as a teacher of wisdom beyond convention, as a social prophet of the kingdom of God, and as a movement initiator who attracted the marginalized. For Borg, the Gospels are a mixed bag of “history remembered” and “history metaphorized” (p. 4). So, on the one hand, Borg admits that Jesus really was crucified and probably did heal literally blind persons, but the feeding of the multitudes, borrowing from the exodus narrative, is metaphorical (“intrinsically nonliteral”). Consequently, we have two Jesuses, according to Borg: a pre-Easter Jesus and a post-Easter Jesus (what Jesus became after his death). Borg asserts that Jesus was “Jewish mystic” before Easter and after Easter became “Christian messiah.”

In Borg’s view, “it is irrelevant whether or not the tomb was empty” (p. 131). Despite this, Borg argues that Christians through the centuries “have continued to experience Jesus as a living spiritual reality, a figure of the present, not simply a memory from the past” (p. 135). It is these experiences—not an empty tomb—that ground the truth of Easter.

Unlike Wright, Borg doubts that Jesus thought of himself as the messiah (p. 146)—even though both of them see Jesus as a “movement initiator.” And the “I am” sayings of John are attributable to the early Christian community (p. 149). Psychologically sane human beings, Borg asserts, simply don’t make such claims (“we have categories of psychological diagnosis for people who talk like this about themselves” [p. 149]). Of course, the question remains (as C. S. Lewis noted about persons claiming to be poached eggs): Why would early Christians present a psychologically challenged Jesus, which would only work to the detriment of their message?

Furthermore, Borg believes Jesus was killed as the result of Roman collaboration with Jewish leaders because this social prophet “challenged the domination system in the name of God,” not simply because he was a mystic, healer, and wisdom teacher (p. 91). (Although Wright sees Jesus’ death as a self-conscious suffering Israel’s

death—the supreme exile—on Israel’s behalf, the political reason for Jesus’ death was that he was a threat to the Jewish authorities’ power base.)

As startling as it may appear to evangelicals, Borg feels quite comfortable reciting and affirming the Nicene Creed, that was written in culturally relative terms (p. 153) and expresses a modalistic understanding of God (p. 154). And more than anywhere else, it is in Jesus that Borg says he sees what God is like. To see *this* is what it means to be Christian (p. 156).

By contrast, Wright is much more optimistic about the historical reliability of the (synoptic) Gospels. Even though we know Jesus through history and faith, these can be integrated rather than compartmentalized: history prevents faith from becoming fantasy, and faith prevents history from becoming mere antiquarianism (p. 26). Suspicion (or critical realism) has its proper place in historical studies—although healthy suspicion often gives way to paranoia in NT studies. Wright properly warns that we cannot assume ahead of time that the Gospel material was invented by the early church.

Wright places Jesus squarely in his first-century, second-temple monotheistic Jewish context and belief system. The prevailing belief among Jews was that when YHWH becomes king, Israel will return from exile, evil will be defeated, and YHWH himself will return to Zion. This was not a Christian retrojection, but was steadfastly believed by the Jews of Jesus’ day. In his self-replacement of the temple, Jesus the reformer called people to abandon their hope in political revolution and to join him in his vision. In this thoroughly Jewish context, Jesus had sought to bring about a true Israel that would be a light to the nations, and thus Israel’s redemption would come through suffering. Once Israel’s exile had been dealt with on the cross, forgiveness could be granted. Thus individual salvation through Christ’s cross-work, while truly obtained, is not the whole story. But having dealt with Israel’s exile, it is not a far step to think he has thus dealt with the whole world’s exile and its enslavement to principalities and powers (p. 104).

Regarding Jesus’ death and resurrection, Borg considers the accounts of Jesus’ trial questionable, as Jesus’ disciples are not witnesses (although Borg claims Mark’s account of Jesus’ final week in general is “historically plausible” [p. 84]). On the other hand, Wright argues claims that details of Jesus’ trial could easily leak out and travel by word of mouth to his followers. Wright also sees Jesus’ bodily resurrection as the event which allows “all the other [historical] data to fall into place” (p. 124). Moreover, Wright notes how remarkable are NT assertions of Jesus’ universal lordship (1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:5–11; Col 1:15–20) that draw on “fiercely monotheistic” Scripture and tradition. Even though Wright does not think Jesus “knew he was God” (p. 166), he says that “we have no reason to suppose the early church made this material up” (p. 166).

The book is significant in that it can assist in eliminating flawed stereotypes and in diminishing misunderstandings of “the other side” in the historical Jesus debate. I would find myself in general agreement with Wright and in general disagreement with Borg at many places. For example, even if certain OT motifs are used in the Gospels to show certain typological connections between previous events and personages, why should this necessarily undermine the Gospels’ historicity? Moreover, while the complexities and subtleties of developing Gospel tradition are not always easy to sort through, again, such development need not be viewed as an undermining of a general historical core or that significant harmonization is impossible. Also, Borg’s freely reciting the Nicene Creed, which he takes to be formulated in culturally relative terms, has an antirealist ring to it.

While Wright offers his own criticisms elsewhere of traditional evangelical perspectives on Jesus’ person and work (cf. Carey Newman, ed., *Jesus and the Restoration of Israel* [InterVarsity]), evangelicals will find a number of Borg’s claims (e.g. “the Bible is a human product” [p. 240]) problematic. Wright and Borg agree that nonhistorical stories can have theological meaning and historical stories can have metaphor-

ical as well as historical meaning. But the point of divergence is “whether the metaphorical meaning of stories ostensibly about Jesus is dependent upon the story’s reporting a particular historical occurrence” (p. 216). So for Borg, the Emmaus story would be “true” even if it did not happen, whereas Wright would disagree. For Jesus’ first followers, symbolic meaning was rooted in actual events (p. 217).

Can we truly identify the Jesus of history as the Christ of faith? Should the “modern” mindset conform itself to an orthodox Christian understanding of reality? Here we have a book in which one author says “no” while the other says “yes.”

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*New Testament Christology.* By Frank J. Matera. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1999, 307 pp., \$26.95 paper.

This is a fine description of the Christologies in the NT by a professor at the Catholic University of America. Matera carefully distinguishes the diverse views of Biblical authors, while recognizing the overriding unity of Christological themes throughout the NT.

Matera’s focus is more literary than historical. He inductively describes the Christologies of various NT books, but makes little effort to reconstruct the theology of the historical Jesus. He rarely critiques other works on NT theology, although extensive endnotes point to numerous scholarly articles and books.

Unlike many books on NT Christology focusing on Christological titles or soteriological terms, Matera’s work employs a narrative Christology method. He seeks to reconstruct the explicit and implicit “stories about Christ” in each work. The Gospels, of course, present their Christology in the form of narrative that gradually guides the reader to learn something about the person and mission of Jesus. The rest of the NT writings *presuppose* an underlying narrative about Christ, from which they draw concepts to support their message. Just as there are diverse Christologies in the NT, the story about Christ varies among Biblical authors and even books by the same author.

Matera’s narrative approach excels in the Gospels, where the narrative about Christ is explicit. For example, he shows that Mark is a skilled story teller who gradually unfolds Jesus’ identity and messianic mission to the reader. Although the reader knows from the beginning of the story that Jesus is the Messiah, the nature of his messianic role is unveiled only gradually. Matera gradually presents the Christology of each Gospel, section by section, followed by a summary of the author’s views. Although this format makes it difficult to get the big picture until the end of the chapter, it highlights the literary techniques used by the Gospel writers to present Jesus’ person and mission. A summary chart comparing the major concepts in all the Gospels would clarify the similarities and differences.

Matera’s narrative method is more controversial in the epistles. “Paul’s Christology is embedded in an underlying narrative just as the Christology of the Gospels is encoded in the narratives they relate” (p. 87). Paul understood himself in terms of the story of his own life and the story of Israel. His understanding of the story of Israel was radically changed when God revealed to him that the crucified Jesus was God’s son and the Messiah. The story of Christ includes the story of Israel and signifies “the story of God’s dealings with Israel and the Gentiles in light of what God has done in his Son, Jesus Christ” (p. 85). Matera also reconstructs Paul’s “narrative grammar,” i.e. how Paul’s concepts about God, Christ, Israel, the Gentiles, and creation interrelate in the story to form the plot. “The principal actor of his Christ story is God; the recipient or beneficiary of God’s salvific work is humanity, Gentile as well as Jew; and

the agent by which God accomplishes this work in Christ, the Son whom the Father sent into the world to rescue it from the coming wrath" (p. 88). Although the complete story does not appear in any single letter, Matera reconstructs a composite story of Christ from the undisputed Pauline epistles. Paul's Christ story shifted as he wrote letters to deal with various challenges in the churches. Thus the story in Galatians begins with Abraham to show that the Gentiles are Abraham's descendants through faith rather than circumcision, while the story in Romans begins with Adam to show that God has rescued humanity from sin through faith in Christ and not the law.

Matera clearly shows the distinctive Christologies of each Pauline epistle. Yet his narrative methodology risks imposing an external postmodern structure on Paul, rather than describing Paul's thoughts in his own terms. While constructing the implicit story of Christ yields valuable insights into Paul's thinking, it is not as clear that Paul "understood himself" in terms of these narratives (p. 84) or that they integrated Paul's Christology.

Each chapter presents the Christology of a different portion of the NT. Matera carefully distinguishes the different views of Biblical authors on the same theme. For example, both Mark and John present Jesus as Son of God, but each interprets this term differently. For Mark, Jesus is the obedient and faithful Son of God who proclaimed the kingdom and was crucified, but John stresses the incarnation of the preexistent Son of God, who dwelt in God's presence.

Matera also finds substantial unity amidst the diverse Christologies of the NT. The various views of NT authors do not contradict one another but stand in "creative tension" (p. 2). Beyond this tension, there is a "profound unity" in the stories and concepts about Jesus (p. 243). NT authors show unity about Jesus' messiahship, his significance for Israel and the nations, his relationship to the Church and the world, his meaning for the human condition, and his relationship to God.

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*Beyond Resurrection.* By A. J. M. Wedderburn. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999, 306 pp., \$19.95 paper.

A. J. M. Wedderburn, professor of NT at the University of Munich, has attempted to use the historical-critical method to ascertain whether the resurrection of Jesus is historically probable, improbable, or "somewhere in the middle." After having decided in the first half of the book that we must be agnostic as to the historicity of Jesus' resurrection, Wedderburn spends the second half of the book attempting to come to terms with the implications of this verdict.

Wedderburn is well read, as the 22-page bibliography and 45-page section of endnotes demonstrates. Yet one is struck by the almost complete absence of evangelical sources. In fact only about a dozen conservative works are cited in the bibliography and almost none are actually utilized in the endnotes. This may very well be because of the dismissive manner with which Wedderburn treats any attempt to deal with textual discrepancies. Wedderburn gives the impression of being very fair-minded and open to the evidence, as seen by his long and somewhat convoluted discussions on various points, but he is extremely closed minded and biased when it comes to considering questions dealing with the reliability of the Gospel texts.

Wedderburn begins his study by arguing that the resurrection of Jesus must be open to historical scrutiny, and that attempts to safeguard the resurrection by calling it "metahistorical" or "suprahistorical" will not do. He then turns his attention to historical problems in the resurrection accounts, listing ten well-known historical dis-



crepancies between the accounts given in the four Gospels. However, rather than a discussion of evangelical explanations to these problems, one finds a less than one-page treatment here. Wedderburn notes that one could say that each Gospel writer did not always give all the details and information that was available, yet he dismisses this with the statement: "Yet in the end such attempts to salvage the accuracy of the accounts in their entirety run into intractable problems like Luke's exclusion of the possibility of appearances to the disciples in Galilee. His Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles simply leave no room for resurrection appearances to the disciples there" (p. 26).

Wedderburn continues by stating that anyone who does not recognize the disunity of the texts is "concerned to press the texts into a fundamentalist straitjacket" (p. 26). This cavalier attitude is quite disappointing since the problem of Galilean appearances and Luke's Gospel is not a new problem. Evangelical scholars have offered plausible exegetical solutions to this problem. It is one thing for Wedderburn to enter into dialogue with these scholars and find their solutions wanting. It is quite different simply to ignore those attempts and then conclude that there is an intractable problem in the text!

Wedderburn dismisses the accounts of the empty tomb as unhistorical, believing that Jesus would have been buried with other criminals in a common grave. Thus, no one could have produced the body of Jesus unless they could have identified the specific remains as being those of Jesus. The tomb could not have been empty since others were buried there, not just Jesus. Wedderburn believes that the lack of any veneration of Jesus' tomb proves that he was not buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, but in a common grave.

Concerning the nature of Jesus' resurrection body, priority must be given to Paul's account. Since the resurrection of Jesus is viewed as visionary by Paul, whether subjective or objective, "we cannot, without good reason, assume that any claimed 'appearances' of the risen Jesus were different in kind and nature from whatever Paul experienced on the way to Damascus" (p. 74). Wedderburn appears to lean toward an interpretation of the resurrection of Jesus that would identify it as a way of expressing the transformation and empowering of the early Christians.

Wedderburn's conclusion is that "very little can be verified historically above and beyond the disciples' faith: something, a mysterious something, happened to them, but further than that we cannot penetrate" (p. 89). We must be prepared "to move beyond this 'resurrection' to expound the nature of Christian existence in a way that is independent of this term" (p. 95).

The second part of *Beyond Resurrection* is "concerned with the implications of this apparent 'dead end' for our understanding of Christian faith and of God, with a coming to terms with the loss of what had previously been thought to be the firm basis for so many traditional assertions about God, Jesus and the world" (p. 99). In this endeavor, Wedderburn self-consciously moves beyond the NT, though he claims that he is keeping with the spirit of Jesus' teaching in John's Gospel that after Jesus is gone, the Spirit would lead them into greater truth. "We cannot rest content with the answers which the New Testament gives us, for it sees that the New Testament is not internally consistent, nor can it be shown to correspond to what we know of the world" (p. 106).

At another point Wedderburn exclaims, "Here it seems to me that Paul's logic simply cannot hold water today" (p. 154). Paul's teaching that one's fate in the afterlife depends upon one's relationship to Christ scandalizes Wedderburn. He says that Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 15 "devalues and disregards much that is of worth in other human lives than that of Jesus: countless individuals have lived valuable and admirable lives, regardless of whether their services to humanity and to the God in whose image humanity is made have been performed in the name of Christ or not" (p. 155). In the end Wedderburn gives us a God who is viewed as "an organizing principle which

is not omnipotent, but which must struggle to achieve its goals despite the resistance of the workings of nature" (p. 218). Yet this "God" is also somehow personal and Wedderburn gives numerous analogies to show how these two apparently contradictory ideas of impersonal order and a personal God can co-exist in our lives.

Unfortunately unless one shares Wedderburn's skepticism about the historicity of the Gospel accounts, there is little that is useful in this book. It is an interesting exercise in the futility of trying to create God according to "reason" and our experiences rather than according to his self-revelation in the Scriptures.

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*Women Leaders and the Church: Three Crucial Questions.* By Linda L. Belleville. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, 217 pp., \$13.99.

Reading this latest addition to Baker's "Three Crucial Questions" series reminds one of the inaugural volume in that series, Murray Harris's *Three Crucial Questions about Jesus*. In that book, Murray Harris asks three truly crucial—and largely non-overlapping—questions: "Did Jesus exist?"; "Did Jesus rise from the dead?"; and "Is Jesus God?" and answers them by adducing appropriate primary evidence in the meticulous fashion characteristic of this author, yet in such a way that a lay audience is able to benefit from his treatment.

How does Belleville's volume on women leaders and the church hold up by comparison? Not very well. First, of the three "crucial questions" she asks at the outset—"In which ministries can women be involved?"; "What roles can women play in society?" and "Can women hold positions of authority?"—the first and third questions overlap (and it is unclear why the second question is sandwiched between the first and third). Clearly, the issue of whether women can hold positions of authority will affect one's view of the question in which ministries women can be involved. As it is, however, Belleville seeks to defer dealing with the third question, so that the reader of chap. 1 is left with a solitary footnote (n. 34, p. 187), in which Belleville acknowledges that "[t]he only roles lacking female names are *overseer* and *elder*, but then specific men are not singled out in these capacities either" (!). (This cavalier dismissal, by the way, won't do. Does not already the requirement of overseers to be "faithful husbands" [1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:6] suggest that Paul assumed the holders of this office to be male?) In any case, the issue deferred until the final chapter, then, already constitutes an integral part of the first question, and to separate the two questions and to deal with them in the order in which Belleville does is at best artificial and at worst slants the results in a misleading direction.

Second, though advertised by Baker as "even-handed," Belleville's volume has all the trappings of egalitarian bias, a fact that is all the more problematic as this orientation is not acknowledged anywhere in the volume. Rather than presenting both sides of the issue fairly, this book reads more like an attempt to substantiate egalitarian gender roles from Scripture. One glaring case in point is Belleville's choice to ignore entirely the most thorough treatment on 1 Tim 2:9–15 currently available (*Women in the Church*; ed. Köstenberger et al.; Baker, 1995), not only in her discussion of that passage, but even in the selected bibliography at the end of her volume. I know egalitarians may disagree with a work in which I participated but it is quite puzzling that they should ignore it entirely. How can such a procedure lay a legitimate claim to respon-

sible scholarship? Unfortunately, even the series editor (himself an egalitarian) overlooked this omission. To advertise this kind of treatment as “even-handed” (as the publisher does) takes considerable nerve. Belleville’s practice of putting her discussion of 1 Timothy 2 *last* in dealing with the issue (p. 16) is also standard egalitarian procedure. (Belleville does attempt a one-page rebuttal of my article on 1 Tim 2:12 in the recent *Two Views on Women in Ministry* [2001], pp. 135–36, with the bizarre and highly eccentric rationale that infinitives are not verbs and that 1 Tim 2:12 has to do with ideas, not grammar, classifying the “neither/nor” construction as a “poetic device.” She also entirely misconstrues the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12, maintaining that the two infinitives modify “a woman”—in fact, they are complementary to “I permit” [cf. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, pp. 598–99, who lists 1 Tim 2:12 under “complementary,” one of six subcategories of the adverbial use of infinitives]—and that the question answered by these infinitives is “What?” when in fact it is “To do what?” [namely, to teach or exercise authority], which, of course, confirms that the two infinitives convey the *verbal* notion of actions to be performed [or not performed]. I doubt many will follow Belleville’s reasoning here that runs afoul the most elementary notions of Greek grammar and syntax.)

Third, Belleville’s book is considerably less accessible to a lay audience that Harris’s *Three Questions* volume, as a comparison of the number of endnotes illustrates (Harris, about 75; Belleville, almost 200).

By way of more detailed interaction, I personally agree with Belleville on the presence of women deacons in 1 Tim 3:11; Junia as a woman missionary in Rom 16:7; and Phoebe as a deaconess in Rom 16:1 (see my essay on “Women in the Pauline Mission” in the recently released O’Brien *Festschrift, The Gospel to the Nations*; ed. Bolt and Thompson). On the other hand, I take exception to the author’s practice, on the very first page of her introduction (p. 15), of aligning those who point to Jesus’ choosing only men for his Twelve and to Paul’s prohibition of women from authoritative teaching offices with the 2nd century Jewish rabbi who thanked God that he was not a woman.

Complementarians are regularly stereotyped. Thus 1 Cor 14:34–35 and 1 Tim 2:11–15 “are typically where the discussion begins and ends” (p. 20). Sleight of hand repeatedly replaces responsible scholarship, which is deplorable in a volume addressed primarily to a lay audience where not many will have the skill to check out Belleville’s claims. For example, when evidence is given for women elders, no dates are given (pp. 25–26); regarding women as heads of synagogues, the only date supplied is the 2nd cent. AD (pp. 24–25). On women priestesses, Belleville offers innuendo rather than hard evidence (“raises intriguing possibilities,” p. 27).

On a theological level, the author claims, in a debatable assertion, that ministry in the early church was exclusively charismatically driven, a mere function of spiritual gifts (pp. 39–41); and since there are no gender limitations on gifts, no distinction should be made between male and female roles in the church (p. 41). This, of course, ignores the teaching of the Pastoral epistles (e.g. the reference to *episkopē*, “the office of overseer,” in 1 Tim 3:1). According to Belleville, there is in the NT no distinction between unofficial and official, public and private, authoritative and nonauthoritative instruction. But what about the requirement that overseers be able to teach in 1 Tim 3:2 and the reference to elders ruling the church, including those whose work is teaching and preaching (5:17)? Clearly, teaching was an important part of the office of overseer.

For Belleville, the more women in leadership, the better. On p. 46, she says that “[t]he neighboring nations fared even better” because they could claim Jezebel, wife of Israel’s king Ahab, as their own! The NT, however, portrays Jezebel as a prototypical false teacher (Rev 2:20; though Belleville does acknowledge that she was “infamous for her political maneuvering,” p. 46). “Women leaders” (pp. 49–50) perpetrates

the ambiguous use of language common to much egalitarian fare. On p. 55, Junia is mentioned at first as if she were an *apostolos* all by herself (e.g. “she is commended by Paul for her outstanding apostolic labors”); only later it is acknowledged that Junia and Andronicus were probably a “husband-wife team” (p. 56).

When dealing with prophecy (pp. 56–57), Belleville says the only difference between men and women exercising this gift is the attire (headcoverings of women; twice quoting 1 Cor 11:4–5); but there is no hint that the attire reflected an authority structure (1 Cor 11:3). Rather, the author concludes that “[w]omen functioned in a highly visible leadership capacity” (ignoring 14:34–35)! Later (pp. 64–65), Belleville quickly jumps from women’s praying in church to women being worship *leaders*, the only evidence cited being 1 Cor 11:4–5.

On p. 59, Belleville writes that “Priscilla took Apollos aside” and instructed him. While she also mentions Aquila elsewhere on the same page, the just-quoted statement is still inaccurate, partial, and misleading as it stands, for it gives the impression that Priscilla instructed Apollos independently and by herself. On p. 68, Belleville writes that “when Luke refers to their occupation as tent-makers, the order is ‘Aquila and Priscilla’ (Acts 18:2; cf. 1 Cor. 16:19), but when Luke and Paul speak from a ministry point of view, the order is always ‘Priscilla and Aquila’”; but this is misleading, since in 1 Cor 16:19 there is no mention of their being tentmakers at all. Equally dubious is Belleville’s denial of any distinction between private and public instruction and her claim that Priscilla “perhaps” functioned as overseer (p. 68).

These kinds of judgments (and the examples could be multiplied) are hardly the result of an “even-handed” assessment of the available evidence. More likely, they reflect an egalitarian bias.

Would I recommend this book, then, to those who are largely unaware of, but interested in, the present issue? While Belleville’s handling of the subject is not incompetent at places and while she is clearly knowledgeable on the subject and generally well aware of the scholarly debate, the answer must be “no,” because the present volume does not qualify as an even-handed assessment of the issues involved in dealing with the question of “women leaders in the church.” Taken as such, *Women Leaders in the Church* may do more harm than good.

A final word to the publisher: In my opinion, entries such as these weigh down the entire *Three Crucial Questions* series. If this is the new direction for this series, perhaps the time has come to call an end to it rather than to diminish earlier contributions by associating them with works such as the present one.

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*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles. Vol. II: Introduction and Commentary on Acts XV–XXVIII.* By C. K. Barrett. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998, cxx + 695–1271 pp., \$69.95.

Those who are familiar with Barrett’s work will not be disappointed by the second volume that completes his commentary on Acts. This work represents the pinnacle of Barrett’s contribution to Lukan scholarship. Together with the numerous other commentaries he has published, it will prove a valuable resource for years to come.

As promised in the first volume, the second volume begins with a detailed 100-page introduction. While the preliminary introduction to Volume I covers primarily the textual evidence for Acts, in this second volume other traditional introductory questions

receive proper treatment. In his discussion of sources, Barrett diverges from the pessimism of Dupont and others as he provides a sketch of traditions available to the author of Acts. This concern for source-critical issues resurfaces at various points as he comments on individual pericopes. The focus of this discussion lies in the issue of the "we-passages." Without addressing the multiple possibilities in detail, Barrett interacts primarily with the work of C. J. Thornton, who defends the traditional hypothesis that the "we-passages" signify eyewitness accounts of Luke, the companion of Paul. In light of the writer's profound misunderstanding of Pauline thought, Barrett concludes that the relationship between the author of Acts and Paul cannot be established. Therefore, "[t]hat Acts as a whole was written by one of Paul's immediate circle is very difficult to believe; that the author, whoever he may have been was able to draw on one or two sources derived from that circle—the We-passages and perhaps some others—is probable" (pp. xxviii–xxix).

In discussing "Acts as a Historical Document," the conclusion of the previous section reappears. While maintaining that the author writes as a responsible historian, this early Christian document is not exempted from errors and inconsistencies. In his discussion of the Jerusalem council, for example, the historical issues within the text of Acts and difficulties that arise when Luke's report is compared with the Pauline account are highlighted (pp. xxxvii–xxxix). The absence of close interaction between the author and Paul is assumed. Moreover, in order to explain such "problems," Barrett refers his readers back to the suggestion of F. C. Baur, with the added qualification that Baur's reconstruction of division and consensus should be pushed back to the first century. This leads Barrett to a discussion of the purpose of the work. Instead of seeing Acts simply as providing data for the reconstruction of early Christian history, Barrett argues that the author "wished to hold up before his readers a set of Christian ideals which would show them what their own Christian life should be and at the same time supply them with a strong motivation for following the example" (p. li).

Moving from the question of historicity to the question of "Acts in History," Barrett provides an account of the history of the reception of Acts. Its lack of authority among the first few generations after its composition may be explained by the fact that Acts is "neither a gospel, stamped with the authority of the Lord himself, nor an epistle bearing an apostolic signature" (p. lxx). In a survey of the "modern" interpretation of Acts, Barrett provides a brief discussion of critical methodologies used in the analysis of the Lukan writings. Barrett concludes the introduction with a discussion of the theology of Acts, which he organizes according to the traditional categories: eschatology, Holy Spirit, Christology, the church, apostles and ministers, baptism and the Christian meal, *Frühkatholizismus*, the Jews, the law, Gentiles and the Gentile mission, and ethics.

In the body of the commentary, each section begins with a bibliography and a brief introduction that highlights various historical, literary, source-critical, and theological issues. The verse-by-verse commentary leaves no stone unturned. Citation of ancient sources and interaction with modern sources are included in the main text of the commentary.

No brief review will do justice to this massive and detailed commentary. The painstaking analysis of the text is evident, and the textual and grammatical observations are especially helpful. Theological observations find firm grounding in the minute details of the text. The articulation of conclusions reached in most cases reflects the mind of a careful and mature scholar who is more concerned with wrestling with the text than with the novelty of his own interpretation. Consequently, one will find an admission of ignorance whenever a firm conclusion cannot be drawn based upon the information provided by the text.

In his interaction with modern scholarship, Barrett displays a broad knowledge of the history of Lukan scholarship. At times, one may find Barrett controlled by questions arising out of the agenda established by scholars such as Conzelmann and Haenchen. Nevertheless, he has also provided fresh perspectives and questions for the next generation of Lukan scholars.

Moving beyond these general observations, several specific areas of concern should be noted. First of all, given Barrett's focus on source-critical issues, one may wonder how such a diachronic exercise should affect one's understanding of the Lukan task. The relevance of these issues directly reflects the confidence one can place on attempts to go behind the text in the search for the allusive historical core. While one cannot fault Barrett for lengthy discussion when the understanding of a text is at stake (e.g. "we-passages"), at times he seems to imply that the Lukan program is significantly scarred by the limited sources available to the author (p. ci). Furthermore, beyond the historical traditions and the creative mind of the author, greater emphasis should fall upon the significance of the OT as yet another pole on which the Lukan program is constructed.

Barrett's portrayal of Luke as a historian also demands further discussion. Barrett has provided us with a commentary that reflects the current tendency to move away from the extreme skeptical position of critical commentaries of the last generation. The generally positive tone of the work is reflected in Barrett's statement: "There are many features of Acts that must win a favourable verdict on the author as a historian" (p. cxiv). This general statement is echoed by the refrain found throughout the commentary: "The story is not all fiction" (p. 960). This does not mean, however, that one can trust Acts at face value. For Barrett, Acts as a historical source "attains its full value only when used with the strictest—historical and theological—criticism" (p. cxviii). Furthermore, Barrett believes that historical problems in Acts may be traced to two larger issues. First, the writer's apparent lack of personal knowledge of Paul creates problems that cannot be solved through attempts at harmonization. In discussing the "we-passages," this issue becomes most significant for Barrett: "In the end however we have to balance against each other a factual problem (the misrepresentation of Paul's thought and action) and a verbal problem (the retention of 'We' passages in the midst of 'He/they' passages); and it seems reasonable to give the factual problem priority" (p. xxiv). Similarly, in dealing with the Jerusalem council, Barrett laments that Paul has lost his integrity at the hands of Luke when Paul's theology of grace cannot be harmonized with the apostolic degree of Acts 15 (p. cxvi). In both instances, the basis of Barrett's conclusion may be questioned.

The second cause of Luke's "failure" to provide an accurate historical report may be traced to historical distance. According to Barrett, the author is writing "in an atmosphere different from that of the period that he describes" (p. xli), and therefore his account is "distorted by the refracting medium of continuing church life through which he views the past" (p. liii). In his discussion of the historical problem of Acts, it is not so much the details of the account but the writer's misunderstanding of both Paul and the early church that disturbs Barrett. Such misunderstanding is assumed and its credibility is in turn enhanced by its supposed explanatory power in the process of exegeting the various episodes. However, C. Hemer (*The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*), C. J. Thornton (*Der Zeuge des Zeugen, Lukas als Historiker der Paulusreisen*), and most recently S. Porter (*The Paul of Acts: Essays in Literary Criticism, Rhetoric, and Theology*) all have demonstrated that the text of Acts is quite intelligible without making such assumptions.

A more fundamental matter concerns both Barrett's method and his understanding of the author as a theologian. Barrett adopts the traditional historical-critical method and is able to produce a fresh and insightful work. While his cautious comments regarding other methodologies should not be ignored, one wonders if this historical

approach is alone sufficient for uncovering the power of the narrative of Acts. His argument that literary criticism finds “more scope in other parts of the NT than in a matter-of-fact work such as Acts” (p. lxxviii) is debatable, as does his suggestion that “the thought of Acts lies on the surface and does not require elaborate hermeneutical arts to draw it out” (p. lxxviii). While not entirely incorrect, viewing Acts merely as a “matter-of-fact” work can prevent one from recognizing the theological current behind the account of historical events. This may explain why Barrett can say that “there is in Acts no profound Christological thought” (p. lxxxvii) and that the author “has no theological doctrines that he wishes to commend beyond basic Christian conviction” (p. cxii). Moreover, the connections between various episodes frequently lose their significance when Acts is understood merely as a collection of traditional stories. Thus, Barrett concludes that the author’s “strength as a writer lies in the presentation of a single event, not in the logical linking of a sequence of events” (p. 1071). Finally, while his statement that the “lessons Luke presses upon his readers are not speculative but practical” (p. liii) may be true, it sets up a false dichotomy between theological truths and practical admonition, both of which we should expect from the narrative of Acts.

In this commentary, one will value the theological insights built on close textual analysis of individual episodes. However, one would hope to find a deeper appreciation of Luke as a theologian who composes a unified theological work. For what Barrett has given us, we should be profoundly grateful. His knowledge of the text and the world from which it emerges provides us with a solid foundation upon which further studies can be built.

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*The Theology of Paul the Apostle.* By James D. G. Dunn. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998, xxxvi + 808 pp., \$45.00.

A full-scale theology of Paul is long overdue. Monographs on aspects of Paul’s theology are abundant. Faced with the threefold challenge of complex texts (every one with its limitless bibliography), basic questions about method, and the sea change of the “new perspective,” however, no scholar since Herman Ridderbos (1975) has tackled the apostle’s theology as a whole. James Dunn has now risen to the challenge, producing a theology of Paul that will serve as a benchmark for the next generation of students and scholars.

James Dunn is remarkably well suited to the task. He has written significant commentaries on three of Paul’s most theological epistles (Romans in the Word series, Galatians in the Harpers/Black series, and Colossians in the NIGTC series). He has explored many aspects of Paul’s theology in various monographs and articles. He has written on the theological method (*Unity and Diversity in the New Testament* [2d ed., 1990]), and he is the most important advocate of the “new perspective” on Paul. This last qualification also creates an especially compelling motivation for Dunn to write a new theology of Paul. The full-scale re-evaluation of Paul’s relationship to his Jewish heritage within the “new perspective” touches on the core of Paul’s beliefs and therefore has ramifications for all of his teaching. As Dunn rightly notes, a theology of Paul must be more than a summary of what is taught in the letters. It must penetrate below the surface of the text to engage the apostle’s underlying convictions (pp. 14–19). Those convictions are rooted in the Jewish world view of the first century AD—specifically, argues Dunn, in the Pharisaic world view. Paul interpreted God’s eschatological activity in Christ against the backdrop of his own Judaism, a Judaism that above all exalted the Torah as a barrier to preserve Israel from the Gentiles and from

the negative influence of other sectarian Jewish groups (p. 353). A critical challenge to these inherited beliefs came when Paul understood that God was inviting Gentiles to participate as equals with Jews in the messianic people of God. Paul did not abandon his ancestral religion as a result of this insight; he remained a Jew (Dunn specifically denies that Paul “converted” to a new religion, pp. 178–79). But he now had to recast his Judaism in order to provide equal access to God for the Gentiles. The Torah in its function as barrier to Gentiles therefore had to go (“works of the law”; cf. pp. 353–55). But its role in defining right and wrong remained, although now, to be sure, interpreted in terms of Christ’s demand for, and example of, love (“the law of Christ”; pp. 645–57). If Christ, then, is the center of Paul’s theology—the “fulcrum point,” as Dunn calls it (p. 722)—what drove Paul’s theologizing was the integration of that new center with his inherited Jewish convictions (pp. 729–30).

In contrast, therefore, to theologies that treat Judaism as little more than the negative foil for Paul’s theologizing, Dunn, in line with the “new perspective,” insists that Paul’s Jewish convictions fundamentally determine the direction of his thinking and teaching on point after point. But what method does a theologian of Paul adopt to set out that teaching fairly and coherently? Where does one find a framework that will embrace Paul’s variegated teaching without distorting it? There is no better place than Romans, for here we have a letter that gives us a “sustained and reflective statement of Paul’s own theology by Paul himself” (p. 25). Dunn therefore uses Romans as “a kind of template” on which he builds his theology of Paul. It becomes the jumping-off point and constant reference for the theology that Dunn develops in the rest of the book.

The sequence in which Dunn treats the basic components of Paul’s theology therefore appropriately follows the general order of Romans: “God and Humankind”; “Humankind Under Indictment”; “The Gospel of Jesus Christ”; “The Beginning of Salvation”; “The Process of Salvation”; “The Church”; “How Should Believers Live?” Space prohibits even a cursory survey of Dunn’s views on the many specific topics he takes up under these general headings, but a few comments on his general method might be helpful. First, Dunn explains Paul’s soteriology against the backdrop of the by-now familiar “overlapping ages” time-line (pp. 462–65). Paul’s gospel is “eschatological” primarily because of what has already happened (p. 465). Despite this observation, Dunn focuses more than most interpreters of Paul on the significance of the “not-yet” side of the eschatological tension. This focus can be seen especially in his insistence that “justification” is not just a past verdict but a continuing process (p. 386) and in his interpretation of the “I” in Romans 7 as a Christian caught in the tension between the “already” and the “not yet” (pp. 472–77). Second, Dunn rightly underscores the importance of recognizing the metaphorical nature of Paul’s theological imagery (e.g. pp. 238, 288, 332). Indeed, he goes so far at one point (commenting on the implications of Phil 2:6 for the preexistence of Jesus) as to claim that “the metaphor *is* the message” (p. 288). This takes metaphor a bit too far (or not far enough!), but Dunn is right to be cautious about elevating any one of Paul’s metaphors (of salvation, the cross, etc.) to the status of a ruling concept.

In a book as rich and wide-ranging as this one, there are, of course, many specific interpretations that one might want to challenge. I will forego the nitpicking to concentrate on three basic methodological issues. First, in line with critical scholarship, Dunn accepts only the usual seven letters of Paul as authentic and therefore as a foundation for Paul’s theology (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon). To be sure, Dunn does not completely set aside their influence (citing Childs’s canonical approach; p. 13 n. 39), but in practice their voice is not much heard. For instance, Dunn explicitly denies the right of Titus 2:13 to influence the situation when he argues that Paul would not have called Christ *theos* in Rom 9:5



(pp. 252–60). We can expect that the shape of Paul’s teaching would be a bit different at many points were the other six Pauline letters allowed their input into Paul’s theology. Second, Dunn’s choice to use Romans as a template has much in its favor—and who am I to criticize anyone who bases Paul’s theology on Romans? But while the choice avoids some of the subjectivity that inevitably arises when structures outside of Paul are imposed on him, it also creates some difficulties. One worries that occasional issues that arise in Romans because of the specific purposes of this letter might be given too significant a place in a “theology” of Paul, and one also worries that the perspective Romans brings to issues might be given too much prominence. Dunn’s treatment of “Israel” is a case in point. He bases Paul’s “theology” of Israel on an exposition of Romans 9–11, which is fair enough, since nowhere else does Paul deal so extensively with the issue. But one looks in vain for any attempt to integrate the generally “positive” tone about Israel in these chapters with the very “negative” tone in 1 Thess 2:16 and (to a lesser extent) Galatians. A “theology” of Paul must rise above the level of exposition to syntheses of all the apostle’s teachings on a given topic. Third, the need to situate Paul firmly within his Jewish world view, while a salutary development in many ways, can impose too tight a restraint on the freedom of Paul to move beyond that tradition. Dunn’s reluctance to find any idea of the ontological preexistence of Christ in Paul (since the texts in question are dominated by Jewish wisdom and Adam traditions) is a case in point (pp. 266–93). We can all agree that it is what the text says that must decide the matter. But we all recognize as well that the assumptions we bring to the text play a large role in the outcome of that exegesis.

No one can write a theology of Paul without bias. James Dunn is very clear about his own biases as he approaches the subject. The reader needs to allow for these and read critically. But Dunn always grounds his views in the text, interacts widely and fairly with the literature, and writes clearly and engagingly. Not the least of the book’s virtues is its forthright recognition that Paul claims for his own teaching an existential significance that the reader cannot ignore. To engage Paul requires more than academic detachment; it demands that one enter Paul’s world and bring his message back to ours.

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*Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul’s Letters.* By John D. Harvey. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998, xviii + 357 pp., \$24.99 paper.

This work is the first volume in the ETS Studies series. The Evangelical Theological Society has published or sponsored outstanding scholarly monographs in the past, and it is good to see a new series of studies under David W. Baker’s editorship.

As the title indicates, Harvey investigates the ways in which the oral nature of the Greco-Roman society is reflected in the NT letters. Estimates of literacy in the NT period vary from ten to 30 percent of the population. Books and writing materials were expensive. These two factors alone meant that many or most of the early Christians would not be able to read the letters of Paul or other Christian literature. So the early churches often had one person read the text aloud and the rest of the group would listen (see Rev 1:3). It must also be remembered that almost all reading at that time was aloud. Acts 8:30 is a reflection of that practice.

Harvey first researches oral patterning in a historical perspective and reviews past studies in various disciplines. This will be useful for most, because this area of study is a bit removed from many NT students. He then moves to the area of orality

and literacy in the first century. Part 2 of the study focuses on Greco-Roman parallels and includes a chapter on the Septuagint. The LXX chapter treats the major books quoted by Paul (Genesis, Deuteronomy, Isaiah) to see if oral and compositional patterning was common in the OT. With this groundwork, Harvey then sets out his controls and categories. He limits his study to seven of Paul's letters (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon). The stated purpose of the limitation is to keep the study within manageable bounds and to make his results acceptable to a larger audience.

Eight categories of oral patterning that are found in the OT and in the rhetoric of the Greco-Roman world are identified and defined. He also sets out the criteria for their recognition. These eight categories are chiasmus, inversion, alternation, inclusion, ring-composition, word-chain, refrain, and concentric symmetry (pp. 283–84). Harvey then draws out the value of recognizing these patterns for the interpreter of the NT. In some cases, it helps to clarify Paul's argument and to delineate thought units.

This publication includes a bibliography and indexes. To get the most from this work, the reader must know Greek because it contains a lot of Greek text without translation. (This is necessary in the nature of this material.) I recommend this book and the study of its materials and the application of its thesis to other NT books. Our thanks go to John Harvey and to Baker for making it available.

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*The Cross in Corinth: The Social Significance of the Death of Jesus.* By Raymond Pickett. JSNTSup 143. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997, 230 pp., \$66.00.

This is a moderately revised version of the author's University of Sheffield dissertation written under the supervision of A. Lincoln. An exercise in what J. Elliott has described as "sociological exegesis," it aims to uncover from Paul's Corinthian correspondence how his various references to the death of Jesus function rhetorically to address the complex and contentious socio-cultural situation facing both the apostle Paul and his Corinthian converts.

Pickett insists that the cross and the death of Jesus is a potent "symbol with a surplus of meaning." As such its significance is not exhausted by reference to its Jewish background, Greco-Roman context, early Christian interpretation, and Paul's own experience and apocalyptic worldview. Rather, it can also be analyzed and appreciated in terms of its multifaceted rhetorical (or "performative") role within the Corinthian correspondence, a role designed to have a positive pastoral impact upon the convictions and conduct of the Corinthians themselves. Paul is faced with conflicts within the Corinthian community and criticisms of his own apostolic ministry, largely arising out of adherence to Greco-Roman social norms of status, rank, honor, and privilege. By way of response to this scenario, he employs the death-of-Jesus symbol to undermine such self-serving cultural expressions of power, and to urge his converts to adopt the Christ-like, "other-regarding," "power-in-weakness" pattern of life which he himself embodies.

Not everyone will be happy with Pickett's virtual exclusion of the wide-ranging theological dimensions of the death of Jesus, considering too much lost and not enough gained via his concentration upon Paul's rhetorical strategy. Moreover, at certain points where the exegesis seems obvious, belabored, or a little thin on the ground, the specter of sociological reductionism does come into view. But his insightful employment of certain social theorists (Berger and Luckmann, Douglas, Geertz), creative engagement with the socio-cultural work of other Biblical scholars (Judge, Schütz,

Theissen, Meeks, Marshall), and exegetical interaction with key commentators (e.g. Barrett, Furnish), is often thought-provoking and fruitful.

Unfortunately, Pickett does not interact with more recent pertinent works, such as those by A. Wire (1990), M. Mitchell (1992), and B. Witherington (1995). Indeed, with only a few exceptions, the bibliographic entries end in the late 1980s, supplemented by a few footnote entries dated in the early 1990s (which are not always acknowledged in the bibliography).

Such deficiencies aside, this remains a promising and provocative thesis whose aim and execution merit consideration and constructive critique from specialists interested in both its subject matter and methodology.

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*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians.* By Ernest Best. ICC. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1998, xxix + 686 pp., \$69.95.

Once a neglected book, Ephesians now boasts an increasing number of excellent commentaries to guide scholars, teachers, and pastors who wish to understand this rich work. Best's thorough treatment is among the better ones to emerge. He had a distinguished academic career in Scotland and retired from the divinity faculty of the University of Glasgow. This commentary replaces T. K. Abbott's original ICC volume on Ephesians and Colossians, first issued in 1897. It contains three sections: an introduction section that covers the usual areas; the commentary itself, in which are embedded six detached notes on major Ephesian topics (the heavenlies, in Christ, the powers, the body of Christ, Israel and the Church, and the *Haustafel*); and two concluding essays (on the church and moral teaching). Three indexes complete the volume. Best has included a wealth of bibliographic entries; indeed, each section or subsection begins with an impressive list of pertinent resources.

The knotty problem of the authorship of this allegedly Pauline letter receives considerable and tightly reasoned attention. Since Ephesians so uniquely parallels Colossians, Best includes the latter in his assessment of what he sees as the main possible solutions: Paul wrote both letters; someone else wrote both letters; Paul wrote Colossians but not Ephesians; Paul wrote Ephesians but not Colossians; and the two letters were written by two different unknown authors. Next he sketches out the profile Ephesians presents of its author: a male, a Hellenistic Jewish Christian who possessed a complex Greek writing style (often with a liturgical sound to it), and one who consciously specified his name as Paul the apostle. If the writer was not Paul, how can we account for this claim? For Best, the answer is found in the device of pseudonymity. Paradoxically, he allows, "Were Ephesians not by Paul its content might still be true and helpful to believers" (p. 11)—except, of course, in its claim to authorship!

Yet, in fact, Best does his best to defend the notion that pseudonymity need not imply deception, for AE (Best's convention for referring to the author of Ephesians) was simply writing "to instruct Christians in the new situations in which they were finding themselves in the way Paul would have done had he still been alive" (p. 13). Though admitting that by the third century pseudonymous writings were condemned by Christians, Best argues that this was not necessarily true at this early date. He assesses the possible ways in which Ephesians and Colossians might be related. He evaluates the linguistic phenomena in Ephesians and the hypothesis of a secretary to account for the divergences from Paul's typical style. He compares the "thought" of Ephesians to that of Paul. He concludes that Ephesians and Colossians were produced

by different authors—not Paul—who were part of some Pauline school. They take up Pauline concepts and terms, but extend them in new directions.

His case is well argued and certainly plausible, given his assumptions. I think he too quickly dismisses the ethical issue inherent in the hypothesis of pseudonymity to which I briefly alluded above. Two recent theses in Great Britain suggest that we cannot so easily dismiss the element of deception in pseudonymous writing. See T. L. Wilder, “New Testament Pseudonymity and Deception” (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1998) and Jeremy Duff, “A Reconsideration of Pseudepigraphy in Early Christianity” (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, 1998). Both Wilder and Duff argue that deception is inherent in the genre of writing pseudonymously. What makes Best’s approach more curious is how he proceeds to describe the “picture of Paul” we get from this unknown author as reported in the letter, e.g. Paul is a prisoner, or Paul asks for prayer for himself (p. 42). Yet if this is written several decades after Paul’s death by a member of a Pauline school, it all turns out to be spurious concoctions anyway. Of course Paul was once a prisoner, but he’s dead now. This has the appearance of verisimilitude; but if it is only fiction—as if Paul were really in prison requesting prayer—how can we truly derive any picture of Paul from it? All we can know, in Best’s theory, is what AE wanted his readers to think about Paul, and what they were to imagine Paul would say were he alive between AD 80–90.

Best concludes that Ephesians is not a genuine letter after all, but a homily or sermon written and sent out for wider circulation (like Hebrews, James, and Jude). But since Paul normally wrote letters, AE disguises his homily as a letter, says Best. As to the purpose and occasion of Ephesians, Best considers but rejects, as do most, Goodspeed’s theory as well as those who posit that Ephesians was written to oppose the growing threat of gnosticism. He also rejects the view popularized by F. F. Bruce in his NICNT commentary (1984) that Ephesians expanded or universalized the principal tenets of Colossians (see also Moffatt’s *Introduction*, 1918). Likewise he dismisses the position of Schnackenburg’s (1982; ET, 1991) and Lincoln’s (1990) commentaries that sees the letter as a response to crises in the congregations. Best’s conclusion is rather more general: the AE seeks to help Christians, who have now entered into a new group—the church—out of their former paganism, to know what is the church’s nature and what conduct is now required of them.

The commentary itself is a model of thoroughness, and Best takes pains not to neglect any crucial exegetical matter. Modern and ancient sources are used with facility and leave readers feeling that Best has carefully considered the entire history of exegesis in assessing the letter’s issues and implications. Though adopting the Nestle-Aland<sup>27</sup> critical Greek text, he considers the variant readings in that edition all along the way, though few, as he says, seriously alter the meaning of the text.

A review like this must pick on specific questions or highlight possible problems, but let readers know that my concerns are minuscule compared to the otherwise masterful analysis of this letter. I was disappointed that, while Best correctly and importantly notes concerning 1:4, “Election and predestination in our passages are not related primarily to individual salvation but to God’s purpose,” he does not proceed to tease out the possible corporate implications of these theological constructs within the wider community issues of the church’s identity in Ephesians. At the same time, in his note on “in Christ,” Best articulates the corporate nature of that phrase in its local sense: the church is the body that is “in Christ.” Best fully unpacks his understanding of the corporate nature of the church in Ephesians in Essay I at the end of the commentary (pp. 622–41).

The sealing of the Spirit (1:13) specifies the “mark” that the Spirit leaves on believers at the point of their conversion including, but not limited to, charismatic gifts

and the fruit of the Spirit, and indicates to them that they belong to God and are under his protection. Wisely, Best explains AE's use of the "powers" in 1:21 and elsewhere in a way that combines both their natural and supernatural elements, despite the qualms of many in the West to acknowledge supernatural realities. They are connected to the heavenlies (and the stars) and spirits, and they influence or control the lives of people. Importantly, in the view of AE all such powers are now subject to Christ's all-encompassing dominion, and the church proclaims God's wisdom (3:10), in Best's terms, "to facts and observable forces" (p. 179). On the thorny problem of 1:23 Best opts for taking the participle *plēroumenou* and *plērōma* (fullness) as passive and the clause in apposition to *sōma* (body): the *plērōma* is filled by Christ who is himself filled by God. Christ is both the head of the church and fills it as his *plērōma* (p. 180). And then, what means "head" in this letter? Best concludes his note by including both ruler and source: "Of the occasions when Christ is described as head in Ephesians he is clearly depicted as overlord in 5:23 and 1:22. Probably this holds also for 4:15 even if Christ, and not the head, is to be viewed as the source of the body's growth and development" (p. 196).

Considering the many possibilities for the "quotation" in 4:8, Best believes that AE was citing part of a Christian hymn whether or not he actually knew it derived from Ps 68:18. Though finding the view of W. H. Harris and others on the descent (4:9) attractive—that it refers to the Spirit's descent to give gifts at Pentecost—Best finds it, and the patristic view that Christ descended to the underworld, unconvincing. He opts for the simple view that the text refers to Christ's incarnation in this world. He questions the popular view of 4:11 that the one article governing "shepherds" and "teachers" identifies them as one group, often pastor-teachers. According to Best, they may indeed be two—as there are three other groups: prophets, apostles, evangelists—though obviously closely identified and overlapping in their roles.

As to the *Haustafel*, Best observes, "Christianity contains an unresolved tension between authority and mutuality or, in the terms of our passage . . . , between mutual subordination and the authority of some" (p. 517). In other words, he says, though all believers are to be mutually submissive, in their differing functions in the household, some must exercise authority over others, and some must submit to others. As AE is certainly addressing *Christian* readers, submission would be the voluntary response of those who wished to respond "as to the Lord." Disagreeing with Bedale (*JTS* 5 [1954] 211–15), Best believes the sense of "head" in 5:23 must be "rule" since headship of the husband is linked to the wife's subordination.

In Essay II (pp. 642–59) Best analyzes the moral teaching of this letter. In a few words, he is not impressed by what AE has constructed. He finds it lacking in depth, penetration, and focus, compared with other authors of the NT, especially Jesus and Paul. And he finds it very culturally bound with little transfer to modern Christians. In its favor, he admits, is Ephesians' insistence that all Christians are morally responsible, and all must follow the same standards of conduct. Having studied, written, and taught on Ephesians for many years, I find this section very disappointing and wide of the mark. It left a bad taste in my mouth after having profited so much from Best's wise insights throughout the volume. I wonder whether his disavowal of Pauline authorship restricted his ability to understand the book's ethics in the larger understanding of what Paul sought to do towards the conclusion of his career. Notwithstanding, I would recommend this commentary highly. Its judgments are sane and well argued. It is written clearly and well.

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*Revelation*. By Kendell H. Easley. Holman New Testament Commentary Series. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1998, 400 pp., \$16.99.

To call this work a “commentary” is inadequate. It would be better described as a teaching manual for the book of Revelation including comments. Each chapter of Revelation is processed through an eight step grid: “Introduction,” “Commentary,” “Conclusion,” “Life Application,” “Prayer” (written by the author based on the content of the chapter), “Deeper Discoveries” (primarily historical information and word studies), “Teaching Outline” (which could easily be adapted to “Sermon Outline”), and “Issues for Discussion.” In addition each chapter begins with a “Quick Quote” from another author, and an “In a Nutshell” statement of the chapter’s primary content. Furthermore, there are many “Main Point” and “Supporting Point” sidebars for each section.

This highly stylized format is both a benefit and a drawback. It benefits the reader by being easy to follow and to use, as well as providing resources not found in many commentaries. But it hinders a sense of the flow of Revelation by over-emphasizing chapter divisions. Easley is mindful of this when he advises the reader that “chapter divisions in the Bible were not made until centuries after its completion” (p. 54).

I also experienced a degree of frustration in wanting the material found in the “Deeper Discoveries” sections to be included in the commentary text itself. Most of this material seems essential, not tangential as an excursus. This is also true of other sections within the chapter discussion. Some way to coordinate and integrate these various sections better would be helpful. For example, on p. 56 we are cautioned not to use Rev 3:5–6 as a text supporting the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints because of its obviously symbolic nature. Easley comments that this doctrine should be built on “other passages of Scripture” where it is more clearly affirmed, but no suggestion is given as to such appropriate passages. Yet Easley himself unexpectedly supplies this type of information in the “Life Application” section found on pp. 63–64.

Like many *JETS* readers, as a scholar who has taught Revelation on the college and graduate levels for many years, I can identify with Easley. He is well aware of the pitfalls and challenges in maintaining a consistent interpretive position throughout the book. This particular work should be judged for what it is intended to be, not for what it is not. It is not a heavyweight entry into the world of scholarly commentaries, yet Easley is informed concerning recent scholarly discussions. For example his comments on p. 24 indicate his familiarity with the recent debate concerning the relationship between apocalyptic and prophecy in the SBL and elsewhere. But one is somewhat uncertain as to the target audience of this series. It seems to be the elusive “informed layperson,” particularly those who are new to Bible study. This is seen in Easley’s glossary, which includes such basic terms as “Old Testament” and “New Testament.” Because of this I would not see this commentary as adequate for a college-level textbook.

As to interpretation, Easley understands and uses the four visions of Revelation as a way to divide the book, an approach popularized by George Eldon Ladd and others. Overall, though, Easley displays a willingness to part ways with traditional interpretations. This is best seen in his careful handling of chap. 20 and the question of the millennium, the densest sections of this commentary. These sections alone are almost enough to justify purchasing the book for Revelation scholars. Easley has abandoned both the premillennial and the amillennial viewpoints in favor of a “promillennial” interpretation. Some premillennialists will see this as a variation of amillennialism, because Easley finds the thousand years to be metaphoric (p. 382). Others might object that Easley’s exposition of this position is somewhat fuzzy, for he often pleads insufficient information to draw a conclusion (e.g. p. 372). Yet it is

a welcome contribution in the contentious and divisive millennial debates of the last two centuries.

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*Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms.* By Stanley J. Grenz, David Guretzki, and Cherith Fee Nordling. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999, 122 pp., \$6.99 paper.

This little reference book written on 4" by 6" paper defines over three hundred important theological terms. Although the entries consist primarily of English terms, it also includes key Greek, Latin, and German phrases, as well as names of prominent theologians. The print size is similar to what one would encounter in a paperback novel; thus, it does not strain the eyes in the same way as a *Webster's Dictionary*, for example. Indeed, the compact size of the book is remarkably user-friendly for anyone who is already carrying heavy books. Seminary students will appreciate having a light-weight dictionary readily available in class. Librarians may appreciate it, too, since other theological dictionaries on the shelf may no longer be so prone to disappear.

The flaws of the book are few. Occasionally, certain biases appear. For example, the entry *inerrancy* ends with the sentence, "Some theologians, *however* (my emphasis), affirm that the Bible is also completely accurate in whatever it teaches about other subjects, such as science and history." The sentence would be less biased if it simply replaced *however* with the word *also*. Furthermore, certain words foreign to the English language (such as *kerygma* and *imago Dei*) are defined but not identified as Greek or Latin. Both of these examples, however, are exceptions to the overall accuracy and sufficiency of the book.

In the preface, the authors say the purpose of this dictionary is to help followers of Christ to understand texts, lectures, and comprehensive definitions found in more extensive theological dictionaries. Most of all, it is meant to help believers *enjoy* reading theology and gain from it spiritually. Many would agree that very service alone is a great contribution to the Church.

The definitions are concise, not exhaustive. The book is clearly not intended for theology professors or doctoral students, but it may prove to become a classic "survival manual" for students who feel overwhelmed in their reading by the constant barrage of new scholarly theological words. One provost put it this way: "Whereas professors of education speak in acronyms, professors of theology speak in strange theological terms." If studying theology is like "stepping into a conversation that has been going on for two thousand years," then IVP's new *Pocket Dictionary* is an ideal companion interpreter.

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*Fundamentalism and Evangelicals.* By Harriet A. Harris. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998, 384 pp., \$92.00 cloth.

Harriet Harris, Lecturer in Theological Studies at the University of Exeter, has set out in this monograph to reveal what she believes to be the fundamentalistic tendency

that underlies almost all of contemporary evangelicalism, no matter its stripe, creed or location. For Harris, the fundamentalist influence on evangelicalism is essentially ideological and not sociological. Standing against the likes of Marsden, Noll, and Carpenter and following (at least in part) the lead of James Barr (*Explorations in Theology, 7: The Scope and Authority of the Bible*), Harris rejects *militancy* as the heart of fundamentalism and chooses instead to identify its essence as a *particular, unnecessarily constraining and alien view of Scripture*. This realistic, rationalistic hermeneutic has four main components: (1) “a commitment to *a priori* reasoning that Scripture cannot contain any error because it is inspired by God,” (2) “an almost contrary commitment to demonstrating empirically that Scripture is indeed inspired because it contains no error,” (3) “a feeling that in moving away from either is making concessions to modern scholarship,” (4) “and a hesitancy to make such concessions lest they detract from the authority of the Bible and so threaten the very foundation of the Christian faith” (pp. 15, 313).

Having made this assertion, Harris then spends the lion’s share of the book tracing the history of evangelical/fundamentalist intellectual history from the rise of Scottish Common Sense philosophy to a comparison of Old Princeton (Hodge and Warfield) and Dutch neo-Calvinist (Kuyper) theologies and their intellectual progenies. Though the Dutch approach appears to be more promising in throwing off the shackles of this pervasive fundamentalistic mentality, Harris feels that in an almost universal fashion, evangelicalism as a whole has tended to sell the beauty of its heritage—its particular piety—for a mess of philosophical pottage. This sell-out results in the fundamentalization of most of evangelicalism, even those evangelicals who would seek to deny the “fundamentalist” label. Though “[not] all evangelicals think in a fundamentalistic way about the Bible, . . . very many do in some aspect or to some degree” (p. 15). Those few evangelicals who are true to their heritage are those who have not been taken captive by such a view and base their faith not on the factual veracity of Scripture but on an immediate relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Even the Pentecostals and charismatics, who by nature ought to reject the fundamentalistic impulse, regularly succumb. Those who remain true to what Harris feels is the true heart of evangelicalism are but a remnant.

This book provides a wealth of research scholarship into the intellectual histories of both fundamentalism and evangelicalism. The scope of this work is, for the most part, thorough and profound; few stones are left unturned. This book would be a welcome addition to any library. The reservations that I carry from this work, however, are significant. My concerns revolve around the author’s definition of evangelicalism. Though the author is very careful to define what she means by fundamentalism, she is not so careful in defining evangelicalism. Evangelicalism becomes little more than a contemporary “mainstream” interdenominational movement that shares a common “submission to the authority of Scripture” and a heritage of a common piety (pp. 3–4). This definition, for which she offers little support and little further qualification, is so general as to be of almost no use. One of the consequential problems related to this definition is that it ensures the success of proving her thesis. That is, Harris defines contemporary evangelicals as those who rally around a particular view of Scripture and then seeks to prove that often such a “fundamentalistic” high view of Scripture is held by them.

The readability of this text is also hampered by this lack of a strong definition of evangelicalism. While reading, I often found myself having to go back and try to understand under which definition of evangelicalism a particular paragraph or section was operating, a process that certainly slowed the reading process and frequently led to unnecessary confusion. (Granted, this may be the nature of comparative studies of evangelicalism.) With Harris’s very general definition and with other definitions often



appearing, one needed to be very careful about which definition was ruling the context at that particular place in the text.

Finally, Harris fails to differentiate between late-nineteenth-century evangelicalism and the contemporary movement that goes by the same name. Perhaps the reason she finds substantial differences between the two is that they are not the same thing. Apart from being suspicious of Harris's pedestal placing of late-nineteenth-century evangelicalism, I question whether contemporary evangelicalism, particularly North American evangelicalism, can be separated from its history, a history which includes a strong fundamentalistic influence and impulse. Evangelicalism may no longer need to be fundamentalistic, but neither can it simply return to a state that is pre-fundamentalistic. Though it need not be ruled by this fundamentalistic impulse, the evangelicalism that we have now has been unavoidably shaped by it. The question that Harris should ask is not "How can it move back to what it once was?" but "How can it move forward to what it ought to be?" Having had more than just a brush with fundamentalism, evangelicalism's naivete in that regard is gone—and that is not necessarily all bad.

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*Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism.* By D. H. Williams. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, 243 pp., \$16.00 paper.

"If one word could sum up the current theological situation (within conservative Protestant circles)," writes Daniel H. Williams, "it would be *amnesia*" (p. 9). Too many evangelical church leaders have forgotten (or never been taught) the historic theological foundations that define what it means to believe in Jesus Christ. This poses a serious threat to the Church in a postmodern era wherein the Christian message has become increasingly fragmented and the surrounding culture no longer reflects Christian values (p. 12). For this reason Williams argues "that if the aim of contemporary evangelicalism is to be doctrinally orthodox and exegetically faithful to Scripture, it cannot be accomplished without recourse to and integration of the foundational Tradition of the early Church" (p. 13).

Tradition is a hard sell among many evangelical Protestants, however. This is especially true in the so-called "free church" branch of which Williams is a part. Such a mentality often views the period between the second and sixteenth centuries as a time of theological and spiritual backsliding that was only overcome when the Protestant Reformers returned to the Bible and rediscovered the pristine Christianity of the first century. Williams, on the other hand, insists that the Tradition—the central theological formulas that undergird all branches of Christendom—was set forth during the patristic era (AD 100–500). And while this Tradition is based upon Scripture, "the Bible alone has never functioned as the sole means by which Christians are informed about their faith" (p. 29).

Chapters two and three document how both the apostolic and post-apostolic Church held both Scripture and the Tradition in high esteem. The apostolic Tradition was foundational for the writing of the NT, and the post-apostolic Fathers sought to preserve not only the NT but also the central truths set forth in the Tradition as embodied in what the Fathers termed the "rule of faith." Scripture was the final authority in principle; the rule of faith provided the hermeneutical key to the Bible.

In chapters four and five Williams seeks to debunk the prevailing Protestant "free church" thesis that the Tradition embodied in the Nicean-Chalcedonian formulas was

less interested in preserving the apostolic faith than it was in propping up the Constantinian synthesis of Church and state in fourth-century Rome. This “fall of the Church” paradigm views the bishops of the Catholic Church as political hacks seeking to curry the favor of the emperor. Williams counters with extensive documentation that demonstrates how frequently the bishops spoke out against the policies of the emperor and sought to keep spiritual matters separate from political concerns.

Chapter six insists that the Reformation was not principally an anti-Catholic movement but instead a positive effort to recover the authority of Scripture and the central truths of the Tradition. For the Reformers *sola Scriptura* did not mean “the Bible only” in the sense of rejecting the concept of tradition, as prominent evangelicals including Bernard Ramm have stated. To the contrary: “The sixteenth-century Reformers were cognizant of this distinction (between Scripture and the Tradition) and highly valued the Tradition located in the Fathers as means of interpreting biblical truth” (p. 175). For this reason Williams insists that “the Reformation was not about Scripture versus tradition but about reclaiming the ancient Tradition against distortions of that Tradition, or what eventually became a conflict of Tradition versus traditions” (p. 176). The Reformers’ affirmation of the Tradition is seen clearly in their revival of patristic studies and their reemphasis of the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds, which for the Reformers “became documents that linked Scripture to the early church” (p. 177).

Modern-day evangelicals need to follow the Reformers’ lead and reaffirm the role of the Tradition in their reading of Scripture, concludes Williams in his epilogue. In our North American context this is especially important as evangelicals have increasingly sought to emphasize “technique” (e.g. methodological strategies such as “seeker-friendly” churches) as the way of defining Christian faithfulness to the Great Commission. To the contrary, says Williams, evangelicals must emphasize the Tradition if they are not to be swept along by the tides of cultural trends. For despite the outward successes of many market-oriented church-growth strategies, “the vogue of marketing technique and its methods for determining ‘successful’ churches cannot measure the crucial calling for the church: faithfulness” (p. 213). Only the solid rock of a strong *theological* orientation will protect the Church against the shifting sands of modern culture.

Williams is not the first Protestant to insist that the way forward for evangelicalism is the way back to the Tradition of the Fathers, and he acknowledges the contributions of theologians such as Robert Webber and Thomas Oden. His most important contribution to the ongoing rehabilitation of the post-apostolic Fathers is chapter five’s systematic dismantling of the “fall of the Church” paradigm that has severed Protestantism from its ancient heritage. For this reason alone the book is a must read.

Also worthy of note is Williams’s insistence that “Protestants must reconsider the work of the Holy Spirit in the life history of the church no less than in the life of the individual believer” (p. 18). Specifically, wherever an overwhelming historical consensus exists within the Church concerning a matter of Christian doctrine or ethics, we must be wary of those who proclaim that the Spirit has suddenly changed his mind after two thousand years (a point made by this reviewer in *JETS* 41 [1998] 437–38). In this way the Church guards itself against a *de facto* worship of the modern and the inevitable cultural conformity which eviscerates the gospel of its “power of God unto salvation for all who believe” (Rom 1:16).

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*Law and Gospel: Philip Melanchthon's Debate with John Agricola of Eisleben over Pœnitentia.* By Timothy J. Wengert. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997, 240 pp., \$19.95 paper.

In this work, a leading expert on Melanchthon looks into the circumstances that gave rise to the controversy, which has been especially prominent in Lutheran circles, concerning the relationship between the law of God and *pœnitentia*. Because the Latin *pœnitentia* and the German *Buße* have a broad range of meanings and are central to the debate, Wengert has left both untranslated throughout his work.

The prevailing view before the Reformation was that *pœnitentia*, considered a sacrament of the Roman Church, consisted of three parts: contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Rejecting this categorization, the early Reformers were not altogether agreed as to how *pœnitentia* should be reformulated. Even Luther was somewhat ambiguous. Though he insisted that the highest *Buße* was never to commit the same sin again, in later years he also encouraged auricular confession to a priest. The matter came to a head with the Visitation Articles of 1527, in which Melanchthon, following Luther's teaching concerning the highest *Buße*, taught that the preaching of the law helped to bring about true *pœnitentia* in believers. Eventually, he also developed a third use of the law, viz., that the law is a divinely-given standard for godly living. However, John Agricola, a longtime friend of Melanchthon, severely criticized Melanchthon's position and accused him of creeping toward Rome. As the debate grew, the elector of Saxony arranged a meeting of the two disputants at Torgau. Here, Luther was instrumental in bringing a temporary end to the conflict. Ten years later the matter erupted again. Agricola, more antinomian than before, declared that "Moses should be hanged on the gallows."

Wengert retraces the controversy but in a different vein than those who preceded him. Historically, other scholars have been more interested in the theological issues or have made Luther a key to the investigation. Not so here. Wengert's approach is historical, and the development of Melanchthon's theology is his primary concern. He has admirably satisfied his purpose, as a quick perusal of the table of contents will show. Chapter one looks at Agricola's early Biblical exegesis (1525–27). This is followed by a chapter on the catechetical material that was produced during the same period of time. The third chapter considers Melanchthon's first reaction to Agricola's criticism. Chapters four and five evaluate the Torgau conference and its aftermath, respectively. In the closing chapter, Wengert discusses the controversy in relation to Melanchthon's theology, specifically how the third use of the law bears upon the material principle of the Reformation (justification by faith) and vice versa.

Though Luther recedes into the background in Wengert's book, one never feels as though the controversy between Melanchthon and Agricola has been detached from its historical setting. While it is true that Melanchthon was theologically closer to Luther in the decade in question, it is nonetheless inescapable that he must stand or fall on his own merits. Wengert has done an excellent job chronicling the *pœnitentia* controversy within the broader context of the early Lutheran Reformation.

Students of sixteenth-century Reformation history will also benefit from the appendices included in this work. The second appendix in particular offers additions to Ferdinand Cohrs's list of early Reformation catechisms.

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*Institutes of Elenctic Theology.* By Francis Turretin, translated by George M. Giger and edited by James T. Dennison, Jr. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1992–1997, 3 volumes, 2223 pp., \$125.

This systematic theology by Francis Turretin (1623–87) is the epitome of seventeenth-century Protestant scholasticism, making it a welcome resource for students of early-modern Reformed theology. Turretin taught theology at the Geneva Academy a century after the school's inauguration under Theodore Beza (1559). Turretin's original Latin *Institutio theologiae elencticae* (1679–85) is offered in George M. Giger's nineteenth-century translation. The story behind Giger's translation points to the importance of Turretin's work among American Presbyterians. Charles Hodge of Princeton Theological Seminary asked Giger, from the Classics department of the University, to translate the *Institutio* in order for Hodge's seminary students to use it in assigned course readings. Thus the Princeton-trained ministers of that era were steeped in Turretin's theology. Robert L. Dabney, among other Reformed educators, also used the *Institutes*. Hodge's own three-volume systematic theology eventually displaced Turretin's work at Princeton, but Turretin's emphases were widely adopted.

Given the scope of the *Institutes*—and its fundamental continuity with familiar categories of Reformed theology—this review will not attempt to survey the content but will note some of its defining characteristics and assess its place in Reformed scholasticism. The work is nicely presented and James T. Dennison's editorial work is to be commended, especially as he traces many of Turretin's unattributed sources to produce an Index of Works Cited. These are linked to the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) numbers. Dennison also modifies Giger's translation by shortening sentences and by including additional paragraph breaks in order to make the text more readable. Supplementary material in volume three includes, among other resources, a brief biography of Turretin, his funeral sermon by Benedict Pictet, a bibliography and a variety of indices. The latter are helpful but uneven in their coverage.

The *Institutes* offer twenty theological topics, ranging from matters of prolegomena, Scripture, and trinitarian theism, to the final topic, eschatology. Turretin emphasizes the covenantal concerns of federal theology and defends a fully determinative version of predestination. His knowledge of Roman Catholic, Arminian, and Socinian theology (as well as patristic and medieval sources) was encyclopedic, supporting his purpose to challenge in polemical—*elenctic*—fashion the opponents of Reformed doctrine. The strategy, while offering his students support in engaging those opponents, led to uneven emphases. For instance, contentions with Roman Catholics, especially, over Church polity, discipline, and sacraments fill most of volume three. Nevertheless, his method produced a highly nuanced theology that engaged virtually all the main criticisms of orthodoxy in that era.

In constructing the positive themes of his theology, Turretin reflects the assumptions of classical theism, following the trajectories set by Beza and early Thomistic Protestants. In particular, Turretin held God's simplicity and immutability—defined in the terms first proposed by classic Greek philosophers—to be touchstone doctrines by which all other assertions are evaluated. Thus God must be pure Act—without any potentiality or accidental qualities. With this comes a correlative view of God as pure Intelligence and Will. While such views are readily affirmed by many Reformed theologians today, the outcome of this logic is the necessity of a disaffected God. Affections or passions of any sort are held to be grounds of mutability because they would seem to require some contingency or responsiveness toward that which is beloved. Turretin, accordingly, assumes God's love to be a function of his will—the channel by which God chooses to express his moral goodness. None of this is remarkable, given the tradition of classical theism at the Geneva Academy from Beza onward.

Turretin, however, was not simply derivative in his work. In an important shift in discussing predestination, he abandoned the supralapsarian theology which had reigned at the Academy since Beza's time and adopted infralapsarianism in its place (see the Fourth Topic). Along with this emphasis, he offers extensive development of the two-sided (*dipleuron*) covenant of grace by which God enables the human mind and will to bear a secondary role in salvation. In this Turretin borrows from the synthesis of Aquinas who described an infused *habitus* of grace—a supernatural quality—which works effectually in establishing faith in the elect. This approach allowed Turretin to present God's immutable purposes at work through the secondary agency of supernaturally enabled human decisions.

We turn now to the question of Turretin's historical context and his place in current historiography. What audience is likely to buy Turretin's *Institutes*, and why? Here we point to a resurgent scholarly interest in Protestant scholasticism among historical theologians and Reformed ministers during the last three decades. Alternatively, there is an emerging reaction against the disaffected God of classical theism. Both schools will find Turretin to be useful reading.

Sharp critiques of classical theism have emerged in recent years including process theology and its more evangelical expression, openness of God theology. Both of these movements represent protests against the disaffected theology affiliated with God's immutability, with the latter school attempting to solve the problem by portraying God as intentionally self-limited and "open" to human initiatives because of his love. Such proposals must be rejected, but the question of how to engage the vast Biblical content that points to God's affective love (as opposed to an anthropopathic solution) invites continued attention. To wit, John Piper's activism in portraying God's attractiveness invites more formal reflection.

On the other end of the spectrum we find a resurgence of Protestant Scholasticism led by Richard A. Muller, whose works such as *Christ and the Decree* point to the benefits of the scholastic method in providing the necessary analytical tools for confronting the challenges of the counter-reformation and for filling the gaps in the Protestant system of theology. The scholastic synthesis, Muller argues, was guided by a devotion to describing a salvation offered freely in Christ. In the course of developing this project, Muller and others have been ambitious and systematic in their examination of the post-Reformation era (e.g. *Protestant Scholasticism*, edited by Carl R. Trueman and R. S. Clark). One task of this school has been to trace the development of this Aristotelian Christianity from its early stages to its maturity. Turretin's *Institutes* are an important primary source for such research.

The challenge of adjudicating theological claims about God—and the nature of his love—presses historical theologians back to the Reformation and beyond. Classical theism began in the synthetic theology of Thomas Aquinas, who engaged both Biblical and secular sources—with Aristotle holding special honor—for his project. The question of Aristotle's legitimacy in such a synthesis, of course, has been sharply debated. For Protestant educators after the Reformation, however, such questions were secondary to the task of formulating a curriculum to train pastors. Given internal disagreements over the question of what to discard and what to retain, their solution was to continue using major elements of the medieval curriculum while adding key insights of the Reformation. These programs drew heavily from Aristotle's works in metaphysics, morality, and logic for much of their curriculum throughout the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Martin Luther, however, had argued in his *Address to the German Nobility* (1520) that Aristotle's *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Concerning the Soul*, and *Ethics* should be discarded by universities. In this regard Luther was not simply reacting to a methodology but to the resultant theology that he saw as badly distorted and unbiblical.

Luther's proposal was not adopted. Thus the Protestant discussions of anthropology (e.g. concerning the intellect, will, and passions) and morality continued to be shaped by Aristotelian definitions in many circles and were widely disseminated through scholarly literature, including Turretin's *Institutes*. Despite this acceptance of scholastic theology, the fact remains that the early Melancthon and Calvin rejected the most fundamental aspects of that Thomistic synthesis, especially in their definitions of grace and faith. These complaints had been registered in Melancthon's *Loci Communes* (1521), in Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, and in Calvin's debate with Pighius. These men held, *contra* classical theism, that the human will is shaped by the affections. Later affective theologians included the Puritans Richard Sibbes and John Cotton and the American Jonathan Edwards. German Pietism was birthed by the same protest. The Scholastic Protestants, by contrast, held that the affections are controlled by the will.

Turretin's *Institutes*, then, offer a case study in the emergence of one major theological tradition within the Protestant Reformation, but it was not the only tradition. Thus Turretin's work offers a resource for comparing Protestant scholastic theology with the theology of other Protestants—then and now—in order to assess the competing definitions that stand at the heart of Christian theology, anthropology, faith, and ethics.

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*John Locke and Christianity: Contemporary Responses to The Reasonableness of Christianity*. Edited by Victor Nuovo. Bristol: Thoemmes, 1997, 284 pp., \$24.95 paper.

*The Reasonableness of Christianity* was published by John Locke in 1695, but it was published anonymously. The content of the treatise was such that Locke expected to stir controversy, and he certainly was not disappointed. Nuovo's book is a compilation of contemporary background literature and responses to Locke's work, varying from Anglican Calvinism through Socinianism (Unitarianism) to outspoken deism. Locke definitely had a strong leaning toward a rationalistic Christianity that was heavily influenced by the Socinians and deists. Whether he was personally a Socinian or deist may be doubtful, but surely his work tries to establish that Christianity supported beliefs and morality similar to those of the rationalists. Thus, Locke argues that reason supports a morality that the Christian religion reveals. It might be fair to state that Locke believed that Christian revelation was necessary for the common people, but the intellectual elite might discover the same truths through reason alone. At any rate, Locke himself saw no conflict between reason and the Christian revelation, and that is his primary theme in his treatise.

Nuovo's edited work contains a brief introduction to *The Reasonableness of Christianity* and to the related controversy. He presents a case that Locke's argument may be understood as an apologetic for Christianity, possibly even having an evangelistic intent to appeal to reasonable people who doubt the truth of Christianity. This seems to be a fair interpretation. However, contemporary writers divided on the issue; some saw Locke as a Socinian, while others saw him as an orthodox apologist for Christianity. The selections in this book illustrate many of the options and give insights into the Anglican Calvinism of John Edwards, the Socinianism of the *Racovian Confession*, Chillingworth's rational defense of Protestantism, moderate English Roman Catholicism, the Presbyterianism of Daniel Williams, the Dutch Arminianism of Philip van Limborch, the deism of Charles Blount, and the orthodox Trinitarianism of the Cambridge master Daniel Waterland.

The book by Nuovo gives a very interesting snapshot of the English religious background surrounding Locke's writing. It provides excellent insight into several of the numerous controversies of the times. To me it is apparent that Locke and many of his respondents hoped both to defend the Christian faith and to encourage Christian unity in a time of religious perplexity. This book would be excellent reading for a course in the religious thought of seventeenth and eighteenth-century England.

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*Edwards in Our Time: Jonathan Edwards and the Shaping of American Religion.* Edited by Sang Hyun Lee and Allen C. Guelzo. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1999, xvi + 214 pp., \$18.00 paper.

In the past several decades scholarship on Jonathan Edwards has come into full bloom. The ongoing publication of the critical editions of Edwards's writings by Yale University Press indicates that Edwards continues to hold scholarly attention. *Edwards in Our Time* is a collection of essays presented at the fourth national conference (held in 1996) on Edwardsean scholarship. As such, it is an excellent entry point into recent interpretations of Edwards. The book follows a four-part structure that treats the topics of ontology and theology, ethics, pastoral ministry, and eschatology. Each essay shares the common affirmation that Edwards's thought is innovative and relevant for contemporary philosophical and theological reflection.

In the first chapter, John Smith highlights Edwards's doctrine of religious affections, philosophical realism, and two mode theory of God's activity in the work of redemption as possessing enduring relevance.

Part one considers Edwards's dispositional ontology as a resource for ecological and trinitarian thought. Sang Hyun Lee proposes that Edwards's view of nature as the product of God's disposition to be self-communicative and self-repetitive is a resource for current ecological-theological thought. According to Stephen Daniel, Edwards's (and Barth's) notion of the self-communicative nature of God provides a link with postmodern trinitarian theology.

Part two explores the potential of Edwards's thought for the field of ethics. Roland Delattre uses Edwards's interpretation of the Christian life as "cordial consent" to divine life and beauty, and as active participation in God's beautifying activity, to provide a foundation for constructing an ethics of responsibility as an alternative to deontological and teleological paradigms. Guelzo draws Edwards's theory of free will into conversation with modern theological, experiential, analytical, and mental/cognitive theories of the will.

Part three investigates Edwards's contributions for homiletics and church ministry. From Edwards's conflict over the "Half-way Covenant" and communion participation, Walter Eversley argues that most often a minister should avoid the attempt to synthesize sacramental and conversionist models of ministry because of their inherent incompatibility. Besides highlighting points of continuity between Edwards and modern revival movements, Helen Westra illustrates Edwards's homiletical technique of correlating Scripture with current events in Northampton in order to call his parishioners to revival.

Part four examines implications for eschatology. Robert Jenson infers from Edwards's notion of God as beauty that eschatological hope is realized when the individual is united to God in a perfect harmony (or *fugue*) of love. On the basis of Edwards's dispositional soteriology and utilization of *prisca theologia* (ancient theology), Gerald

McDermott posits the possibility of salvation for individual outside the scope of Christianity.

While each essay is worthy of attention, the articles by Daniel and McDermott will be highlighted due to the provocative nature of their interpretations of and conclusions drawn from Edwards's thought. Stephen Daniel's essay in part one endeavors to identify themes in Edwards's theology which are compatible with postmodern trinitarian theology. For Daniel, Edwards's view that God's identity (both *ad intra* and *ad extra*) is a product of communication and revelation within a discursive matrix indicates that he has adopted the "Cappadocian solution" and thereby surpasses the Augustinian substance-based trinitarian ontology. The three persons are defined by and in terms of communication. God is intelligible externally only through the communication of his Word. Daniel's presentation of Edwards is hard to read sympathetically because the language and concerns seem foreign to Edwards. Daniel may be correct in identifying Edwards as a resource for postmodern theology, but he has not demonstrated this through careful primary source documentation. Also, while Daniel affirms Edwards's affinity with Eastern trinitarianism, he fails to mention Edwards's clear connection to Augustinian trinitarianism. Furthermore, the uncritical acceptance of the Cappadocian-Augustinian antithesis is questionable.

McDermott's essay in part four illustrates the influence of Sang Hyun Lee's "dispositional ontology" in recent scholarship on Edwards. McDermott applies Lee's thesis to soteriology. The essence of salvation is interpreted as a changed disposition. Salvation is ultimately contingent on the transformed disposition and not on an explicit act of faith in Christ. This opens the possibility of salvation for the non-Christian. Although acknowledging that Edwards never stated this explicitly, McDermott suggests that the notion is implicit to his dispositional soteriology. The individuals' dispositional transformation is occasioned by their response to God through the vestigial elements of original revelation given to all peoples (*prisca theologia*). He also argues that Edwards's dispositional soteriology shows a clear breach with Protestant Scholastic soteriology. However, in a manner foreign to Edwards, McDermott collapses justification into regeneration and sanctification.

The value of this book lies in providing a snapshot of the latest appropriations of Edwards's thought for modern philosophical and theological issues. A helpful index is also provided. I would recommend this text to anyone involved in research pertaining to Jonathan Edwards.

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*Spurgeon and Son: The Forgotten Story of Thomas Spurgeon and His Famous Father.*  
By Craig Skinner. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999, 263 pp., \$12.99 paper.

By any measure Charles Spurgeon was one of the most remarkable preachers of the nineteenth century, not only drawing thousands weekly to his Metropolitan Tabernacle in London but extending his influence worldwide through millions of sermon reprints and the graduates of his famed college for preachers. Upon his death 100,000 mourners filed by his casket, a tribute to his impact.

The purpose of the present volume is to recount the life of Charles Spurgeon's son, Thomas, who succeeded his father as pastor of the Tabernacle. Born in 1856, Thomas studied art at South Kensington College, then—always less robust than his twin



brother Charles Jr.—migrated for health reasons to Australia at the age of twenty. Intending to become a commercial illustrator and wood engraver, Thomas instead found himself called upon to preach throughout southern Australia because of his father's fame (although at the time Thomas was neither ordained nor theologically trained). Two years later he returned to England, at which time his father privately urged him to become his assistant at the Tabernacle and expressed the hope that Thomas would eventually become his successor. Poor health soon forced him to return to Australia, however, and after a period of itinerant evangelism he spent seven years pastoring Baptist churches in New Zealand. Those years allowed him the opportunity to sharpen his skills as both preacher and pastor away from his father's immediate shadow.

As Skinner makes clear, Charles Spurgeon's death in 1892 at the age of only fifty-seven precipitated a crisis within the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Apparently Charles's brother James (who had been co-pastor with Charles, although clearly not as gifted) was determined to become pastor, finally stepping aside only when the congregation threatened to split. James then inexplicably campaigned for American Presbyterian A. T. Pierson to become pastor of the staunchly Baptist congregation. Following months of turmoil in the congregation, Thomas was asked to assume the pulpit, although he had not sought it nor had he ever let anyone know of his father's private wish for him to be his successor.

Although not as charismatic or entrepreneurial as his father, Thomas comes across as an able preacher and pastor. Skinner details some of his accomplishments, including his successful drive to rebuild the Tabernacle following a disastrous fire in 1898. Of special interest to some historians will be the author's summary of the close ties between Thomas and notable American evangelicals of the period, including Dwight L. Moody and R. A. Torrey. Forced to retire from the church for health reasons in 1908, Thomas continued as head of Spurgeon College until his death in 1917.

Historians will be put off by the author's unfortunate use of "creative dialogue" on occasion, making the book sound more like a novel than a serious biography. This and other techniques certainly make for readability—I defy anyone to read the opening page (a first-person account of a shipwreck on a deserted island) and not keep reading—but it also will make the serious reader question the author's reliability. Such gimmicks are largely abandoned after a few chapters, however, and original sources are footnoted throughout. The author's concern to appeal to the average reader also means he makes little attempt to delve into Thomas Spurgeon's place in the larger world of Victorian England.

More subjective is the question of whether or not Skinner's book helps us understand Thomas Spurgeon's personality; to this reviewer Thomas comes across as devout but somewhat flat. Being a child of a famous person is never easy, and the reader cannot help but wonder what inner struggles Thomas endured in that role or the extent to which his years in Australia and New Zealand—about as far away as one could get from London—were an attempt to free himself from his father's admittedly strong personality. Perhaps his surviving papers give us little clue, but it would have been helpful for Skinner to tell us. Curiously, virtually nothing is mentioned about his relationship with his mother or his twin brother.

The present volume is a reprint of the original 1984 edition, with slight editorial changes.

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*John Stott: The Making of a Leader. A Biography: The Early Years.* By Timothy Dudley-Smith. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999, 526 pp., \$24.99 paper.

Writing a biography of someone still living is to many a questionable practice, but when the subject has made a major impact on his world and the biography can illuminate the readers' understanding of both the individual life and the historical context, then it is more easily justified. Such is the case with Timothy Dudley-Smith's biography of John Stott. This is the first of two volumes and covers the first four decades of Stott's life. The author has been a friend of his subject since their student days at Cambridge in the early 1940s. The biography is without apology friendly and appreciative, but it is not hagiographical. The author defends both his bias and the fact that this biography is essentially a source of information rather than a critical interpretation. The assumption is that others will use this information as a starting point for books with an interpretive focus. Thirty-six pages of notes at the end of the book support the information.

The story begins with John Stott's birth on April 27, 1921, to Arnold and Lily Stott. He was the youngest child, preceded by three sisters, although one of them died before his birth. Arnold was a highly regarded Harley Street physician, a scientific secularist who gave a few token appearances at the parish church (All Souls, Langham Place) each year. Lily was a conventional Anglican who took the children to church and Sunday school. At age eight John was sent off to boarding school at Oakley Hall, where he showed academic promise and developed his passion for bird watching, an interest that had arisen through time spent outdoors with his father. Eventually he became a first-rate ornithologist; this theme recurs frequently throughout the book.

In 1935 John went off to public school at Rugby. In doing so he was following in his father's footsteps, but while there his path diverged in ways that would cause his father consternation. In 1938, through the witness of a fellow student, John was brought into contact with the ministry of E. J. H. ("Bash") Nash, who was commissioned by Scripture Union to evangelize and nurture public schoolboys, many of whom later became major leaders in church and society. After hearing Bash speak in a public meeting and conversing with him privately, John knelt at his bed and embraced Christ and the gospel. He soon started participating in Bash's "camps" (which were actually retreats in stately old mansions) and quickly became one of Bash's leading assistants. Through this experience and Bash's encouragement, John began to think of ordination to vocational ministry.

From 1940 to 1945, Stott studied at Cambridge, first as an undergraduate at Trinity College and later reading theology at Ridley Hall. The Inter-Collegiate Christian Union at Cambridge was instrumental in his spiritual growth. However, he never became a formal member of the group because of a promise made to his father, who had warned his son about that "lot of anaemic wets." Although he kept that promise to his father, his years at Cambridge seriously strained the father-son relationship. First, there was the progress toward ordination. The elder Stott still envisioned something like diplomatic service for his son, whose facility with foreign languages was obvious. In any case, his father could not happily accept the idea of John as a clergyman. Second, the younger Stott was an "instinctive pacifist" and refused to serve in World War II, much to the dismay of his father. This is the most emotionally engaging part of the biography, as the author tells the story with generous quotations from letters between parents and son. John was already demonstrating at that point his firm commitment to be a faithful disciple of Christ, obeying the Lord's commands as he understood them even when his father disapproved, yet remaining respectful toward his parents. The whole episode prefigured his demonstrable long-term ability to defend evangelical truth in a winsome

and respectful manner. One need not agree with all his convictions to appreciate the way in which he communicates them.

Having completed his five years at Cambridge with his evangelical convictions intact, Stott was ordained in the Church of England in December, 1945, and took up his duties as assistant curate at All Souls and St. Peter's, Vere Street alongside the rector, Harold Earnshaw-Smith. In March, 1950, after prolonged illness, the rector died; within the space of six months Stott went from assistant curate to priest-in-charge to rector-designate to rector. The second half of the volume is devoted to the story of Stott's deepening and widening ministry at All Souls and around the world.

Although many thought that he was too young—not to mention too dogmatic and uncompromising—Stott began to patiently reshape and expand the ministry of the very congregation he attended as a child. Obviously a prophet is not *always* dishonored in his own hometown! The author surveys Stott's commitment to every-member ministry, innovative parish evangelism, expository preaching, and creation of wider evangelical networks and the communication of the gospel with personal warmth and rational clarity. This thoughtful declaration of the gospel is what drew him into university missions, first in England and later around the world; much of the latter part of the book surveys this ministry. His early books, starting with *Basic Christianity*, grew out of the university mission talks, and these ministries of student evangelism and writing became his major points of contact on this side of the Atlantic.

The story of John Stott's life from 1960 to the present will be told in the second volume of this biography, and I look forward to its appearance. I must confess that at points I found this first volume a bit tedious (though always graceful) in its detail, but the author's stated intention is to provide a mine of information for others to interpret. Given the list of issues and movements with which John Stott has been involved in the last forty years, I suspect that the second volume will necessarily penetrate more deeply into the thought processes of this noted evangelical leader. But this more recent leadership on a global scale has its roots in his earlier experiences, and that story is told effectively in this book. Many of us owe a debt of gratitude to John Stott for his multi-faceted contribution to contemporary evangelicalism, and we can also be grateful to Timothy Dudley-Smith for telling us how it all began.

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*In the Beginning: Foundations of Creation Theology.* By Herman Bavinck. Edited by John Bolt and translated by John Vriend. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 293 pp., n.p.

What can today's student of Scripture and science learn from a scholar writing 100 years *behind* the frontiers of research? Reformed theologian Herman Bavinck's recently translated work answers that question: plenty. Educated in theology at the University of Leiden, where he interacted with some of the leading science researchers of his time, and at Kampen Theological School, founded by the Christian Reformed Church, Bavinck honed his skills in systematic theology. One of his greatest contributions lay in his capacity to bring together God's special revelation in the Bible with God's general revelation in the realm of nature.

Bavinck's distinctive, as exemplified in this century-old text, is his disciplined methodology: he integrates before he differentiates. In other words, Bavinck establishes the big picture before attempting to make sense of the smaller details. His study

of creation begins with an examination of God's stated purpose in creating. Only after addressing the major doctrinal issues connected with creation does he open discussion of the particulars, such as the what, when, and how of creation.

More specifically, Bavinck explains how such doctrines as the trinity, the atonement, and "end things" (eschatology) both illumine and confine one's interpretation of creation. A sound creation doctrine, he says, must take into account the reasons God gives for revealing himself to humanity via creation, namely to confirm his existence and perfection, to nurture trust in him, to provide consolation in suffering, and to induce humility (p. 25). He affirms the importance of apologetics, observing that man's limitations, physical and moral, create the demand for a defense of the inerrancy of God's words in Scripture (as distinct from theology) and works in nature (as distinct from science).

Perhaps anticipating the ongoing squabble over the superiority of one or the other revelation, Bavinck seeks to settle the matter with the following declaration: "Conflict arises because both the text of the book of Scripture and the text of the book of nature are often so badly read and poorly understood. . . . These facts [of science] are just as much words of God as the content of Holy Scripture and must therefore be believingly accepted by everyone" (pp. 121, 126).

The timeliness of Vriend's translation of *In the Beginning* into English becomes remarkably clear in the book's treatment of certain controversies that still rankle the evangelical community worldwide. Bavinck disposes of the "gap" (or "restitution") theory in just four pages (pp. 97–99, 116). He makes a succinct and compelling case for God's significant creative work prior to the six days outlined in Genesis 1 (pp. 100–101, 122). With respect to the increasingly popular framework hypothesis, Bavinck gently points out where it seems to "force" parallelism on the six-day account.

The book's timeliness (and timelessness) may be seen also in Bavinck's argument for the impossibility of the current—and ancient—quest to know "the complete mind of God," a quest to which famed physicist Stephen Hawking and many New-Age adherents have declared their utmost devotion. Bavinck goes on to identify and address many controversies that, to his thinking, need never have become controversies at all had people handled the text and the facts thoughtfully and logically.

Concerning the timing of creation, Bavinck observes the difficulty of squeezing all the events of the sixth day, described in Genesis 1 and 2, into a single 24-hour day. More importantly, he notes, "Not a single Confession made a fixed pronouncement about the six-day continuum and that in theology as well a variety of interpretations were allowed to exist side by side" (p. 120). He supports Augustine's and Aquinas's exhortation to be cautious in declaring a conflict between science and Scripture, "to enter discussion on these difficult subjects only after serious study." To do otherwise is to risk appearing "ridiculous" and "ignorant" to unbelievers, thus hindering their openness to the Gospel.

Despite his impressive foresight and insight, Bavinck offers some scientifically untenable hypotheses. For example, he suggests that the sun and moon may not have been present in the solar system until the fourth creation day, failing to recognize that the divine light sources substituting for the sun and moon would need to manifest all the physical characteristics (mass, density, distance, temperature, spectral response, etc.) of the sun and moon. Such lapses are forgivable not only because they refrain from dogmatism but also because they reflect the limited scientific certainty of his time.

Bavinck displays in this book an exemplary courage, a passion to use only the best arguments and evidences to persuade secularists to embrace Christ. Rather than avoiding creation theology because of its potential to stir disputes among believers, Bavinck

seeks to promulgate it as widely as possible in order that unbelievers might discover and understand some of the most compelling reasons to believe in the God of the Bible.

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*Van Til's Apologetic: Readings & Analysis.* By Greg L. Bahnsen. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1999, xxiv + 764 pp., \$39.95.

At the 1995 meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Philadelphia, the late Greg Bahnsen delivered an excerpt from *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings & Analysis* as a paper entitled "Van Til and the Copernican Revolution in Apologetics." In that presentation he gave a brief overview of the history of philosophy leading up to the self-proclaimed "Copernican Revolution" of the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant. Bahnsen saw the key question in Kant's transcendental approach as, "What are the preconditions of the possibility of human intelligibility?" Furthermore, he saw this question as providing the key to understanding Van Til's apologetic. While Van Til clearly rejected Kant's phenomenalistic answer as leading to subjectivism and skepticism, and therefore ultimately not answering the question, he took up the challenge and argued that the presupposition of Biblical theism provides the only possible grounds for human intelligibility. Bahnsen saw Van Til as applying the method of Kant and the idealists in a way in which they could and would not.

Around the time of the 1995 meeting and a few weeks before his untimely death, Bahnsen completed work on the manuscript of *Van Til's Apologetic: Readings & Analysis*. The "Cornelius Van Til Committee," an unofficial group of colleagues and friends of Van Til, undertook the task of editing and publishing Bahnsen's manuscript. Their goal was to provide a sizable collection of readings from Van Til's extensive writings, and that goal has been admirably met. The text is arranged in a topical manner, and includes introductions and explanatory footnotes by Bahnsen, as well as the selections from numerous works by Van Til. A different font sets off Van Til's writings from Bahnsen's comments. A single topical selection from Van Til is often taken from numerous passages and even from several works. These are then footnoted together. Some of the chapters include "The Epistemological Side of Apologetics," "The Apologetical Side of Epistemology," "The Psychological Complexities of Unbelief," "The Presuppositional Apologetical Argument," and "Comparisons and Criticisms of Apologetical Methods." Bahnsen has provided the reader with a more systematic treatment of Van Til's apologetic than exists in Van Til's own writings.

One of Bahnsen's central arguments throughout the book, as indicated by his ETS paper, is that Van Til's method was based on a transcendental argument. According to Bahnsen,

Transcendental reasoning is concerned to discover what general conditions must be fulfilled for any particular instance of knowledge to be possible; it has been central to the philosophies of secular thinkers such as Aristotle and Kant, and it has become a matter of inquiry in contemporary, analytically minded philosophy. Van Til asks what view of man, mind, truth, language, and the world is necessarily presupposed by our conception of knowledge and our methods of pursuing it. For him, the transcendental answer is supplied at the very first step of man's reasoning—not by autonomous philosophical speculation, but by transcendent revelation from God (pp. 5–6, fn. 10).

Thus for Van Til (and for Bahnsen), transcendental reasoning is sharply distinct from either deductive or inductive logic, and more basic. It ultimately involves the development and defense of an entire worldview. Thus, presuppositions are not merely assumptions within an argument, but the most deeply held personal commitments that form the basis of one's network of beliefs. The transcendental argument in a nutshell is that only the presupposition of the God revealed in the Bible can give warrant to human rationality and knowledge. Any other basis ultimately dissolves to subjectivism or skepticism. The argument does not state, as so many detractors have claimed, that the unbeliever cannot attain to knowledge. Rather, it merely observes that the unbeliever, on his or her own self-conscious principles, cannot justify any claims to knowledge. The reason the non-Christian can know anything is because Christianity is true.

Throughout the book Bahnsen deals with various criticisms of Van Til. For example, he states, "Fideism maintains that the believer cannot (and perhaps should not) offer rational grounds for the full certainty of Christianity's truth-claims. Thus, Van Til is at the opposite pole from fideism, while his critics, ironically, stand closer to it, for they agree with it (to this extent) that full rational proof of Christianity cannot be given. Van Til aims for rational certainty, while his critics settle for far less, namely, probability" (p. 76). Bahnsen's own training in philosophy is evident at several points, as when he refutes those who accused Van Til of being corrupted by idealism.

*Van Til's Apologetic: Readings & Analysis* is unparalleled in its extent and depth as an exposition of Van Til's thought, combining as it does both Van Til's own words with Bahnsen's solid explanation. While Bahnsen is also known as a strong supporter of theonomy, he restricts discussion of that topic to one footnote. What one looks for in vain, however, is a critical engagement with Van Til's thought in the direction of correcting or advancing his apologetics. For that one must look elsewhere, as in John Frame's *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought*. Indeed, while Bahnsen evinces appreciation for Frame and refers to him frequently, he also takes Frame to task whenever he perceives that he has departed from Van Til's original teaching. Unfortunately for followers of Van Til, this debate has been cut short by Bahnsen's death and must be continued by others.

*Van Til's Apologetic: Readings & Analysis* is a must for college and seminary libraries and for anyone interested in apologetics. This book would serve well as a textbook for a seminary course on presuppositional apologetics. Those who agree with Van Til will enjoy and profit from Bahnsen's presentation. Those who disagree will find common misconceptions swept away and the arguments with which they must deal clearly set forth. We are indebted to Greg Bahnsen for bringing greater clarity and organization to the thought of one of the twentieth century's leading apologists.

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*Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions.* By Winfried Corduan. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998, 363 pp., \$24.99.

How should Christians respond to the challenge of pluralism and religious tolerance? Winfried Corduan's *Neighboring Faiths: A Christian Introduction to World Religions* provides evangelicals with a helpful new tool in this old quest.

As in many books on world religions, Corduan gives a standard description of the major non-Christian religions of the world: Judaism, Islam, Zoroastrianism, traditional religions (African and Native American), Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism,

Baha'i, Chinese popular religion, and Shintoism. Each chapter in this textbook concludes with summary questions to help the student master the material, a list of term paper ideas, and a core bibliography.

Books on world religion tend to write from an evolutionary perspective. That is, the religions of humankind begin with a general awareness of spiritual forces (mana and magic) and then progress to animism, polytheism, henotheism, and finally monotheism. But as Corduan notes, "the kind of development it describes has never been observed" (p. 31). By contrast, Corduan argues that religion begins with God. Monotheism is not the end point of the evolution of religion but the starting point. He documents several cases of original monotheism, concluding that instead of evolving into higher forms of religion, world religions are in fact devolving (cf. Rom 1:18–32).

One strength of this book can be found in its evangelical perspective and evangelistic purpose. As it states in the title, this is a "Christian" introduction to world religions. Corduan "sees interreligious encounters as opportunities for sharing the gospel" (p. 15). Hence, each chapter ends with a section entitled, "So You Meet a Muslim" (or Hindu, Buddhist). He moves away from a sterile, objective approach to religious systems and describes the personal and practical dimensions of evangelism.

Another strength of this book is its emphasis on folk religion. Corduan rightly underscores the pervasive reality of folk religion in every religious system (including Christianity!). He continually reminds the reader that what the religion formally teaches and how the religion is actually practiced may be (and often is) very different.

Overall, Corduan has written a well-documented and practical evangelical response to the religions of the world—a rare blend of scholarship and personal evangelistic concern. The book would be strengthened, however, if there were a greater emphasis on the Christus Victor teaching on the atonement as it relates to folk religionists. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). Through his death, he disarmed the powers of darkness (Col 2:15; Heb 2:14). Through his resurrection, he was raised far above all rule and authority and power and dominion (Eph 1:20–22; 1 Pet 3:21–22). The gospel is not only about reconciliation with God, but also release from Satan. The gospel emphasizes forgiveness through Christ as well as freedom from Satan. This contextually relevant gospel message for folk religionists would have enhanced Corduan's otherwise excellent book.

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