

BOOK REVIEWS

Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible. By Emanuel Tov. Revised, second ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001, xl + 456 pp., \$50.00.

The initial publication of this work in 1992 marked a major step forward in the modern study of OT textual criticism (reviewed in *JETS* 39 [1996]: 337–39). It provided readers unable to read modern Hebrew with access to Tov's views regarding the need for textual criticism of the OT and how such work should be carried out. In this new work, the author explains that a revised edition was needed because of the release of "new publications of biblical texts from the Judean Desert" and because in some areas his own thinking had changed (p. xxxix). The overall plan of the book is the same, and revisions made were subject to the constraints of "the boundaries of the individual camera-ready pages which were submitted to the publisher" (p. xxxix). This means in practice that some pages are new, but many (e.g. pp. 118–28) are unchanged.

Since the overall plan of the book is the same as the first edition, the summary of its contents will emphasize changes. Chapter 1 presents Tov's introduction to textual criticism. He makes a good case for the need for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible when he states that all "textual witnesses differ from each other to a greater or lesser extent" (p. 2). In a second section Tov discusses the practice of textual criticism after the discovery of the Hebrew texts in the Judean Desert in 1947. He views most ancient versions as less important for textual criticism than the common view of previous generations. For Tov, most of a text critic's attention should be given to a careful study of the Masoretic family of texts, the Qumran texts, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint (p. 15). The introductory chapter also includes a brief survey of the historical beginnings of text criticism, as well as a helpful list of definitions of various terms and concepts that are basic to textual criticism.

Chapter 2, "Textual Witnesses of the Bible," is by far the longest chapter in the book, a total of 134 pages. It is divided into two major parts. The first, "Hebrew Witnesses," includes in the main the Masoretic family of texts, the Samaritan family of texts, and the biblical texts found at Qumran. There are few substantive changes from the first edition in reference to the Masoretic and the Samaritan families of texts. With regard to the biblical texts found at Qumran, however, there are major changes. These are motivated by the advances in the publication of the biblical manuscripts from the Judean Desert. The most conspicuous change in this regard has to do with the percentages of biblical manuscripts in each of the five major text groups found at Qumran. In the first edition (pp. 114–17) the percentages were: (1) Qumran practice, 20%; (2) proto-Masoretic, 60%; (3) and (4) pre-Samaritan and those texts close to the presumed *Vorlage* of the LXX, 5%; (5) non-aligned, 15%. The second edition (same pages) offers the following percentages: (1) Qumran practice, 20%; (2) proto-Masoretic, 35%; (3) pre-Samaritan (in second edition also called "harmonizing texts"), 5%; (4) texts close to LXX, 5%; (5) nonaligned, 35%. The main change is a decrease of proto-Masoretic and a growth of non-aligned texts. It would have been helpful had Tov explained in more detail how and why these new percentages had been calculated. In addition a statement on p. 115 is quite confusing: "This group [i.e. pre-Samaritan] comprises no more than 5 percent of the Qumran biblical texts of the Torah (for all of the Bible this group would have comprised some 15 percent)."

The second part of chap. 2, "The Ancient Translations," includes a very helpful section on using the ancient translations in text criticism, as well as discussions of the Septuagint, the Targumim, the Peshitta, the Vulgate, and the Arabic translation of Saadia.

Chapter 3, "The History of the Biblical Text," begins by discussing in more detail the impact of the discovery of the Qumran scrolls on the practice of textual criticism of the OT. Tov's principal idea here involves rejection of the previous scholarly view of three exclusive text-types or recensions (proto-Masoretic, Samaritan, and Septuagint). He argues for a view that recognizes a greater variety of *texts*, texts that he sees as existing in five different groups at Qumran (pp. 160–61). In a second section, Tov develops his ideas regarding the original shape of the biblical text. His view is closer to de Lagarde's position than Kahle's, since he basically opts for a single original text of most OT books that developed in a linear way over time as they were copied by scribes (p. 172). His view, however, is not fully equated with that of de Lagarde since Tov acknowledges that the textual history of some OT books is "complicated by the assumption that in some books the authoritative edition such as known from [the Masoretic family of texts] was preceded by earlier literary editions, each of which was accepted as authoritative by subsequent generations" (p. 177). Tov has changed the position he argued in the first edition in regard to, for example, various editions of the book of Jeremiah by essentially acknowledging that the non-Masoretic textual traditions are more than "mere drafts." He now views them as having been recognized as authoritative by earlier generations in a similar way that later generations came to recognize the authority of Masoretic Jeremiah (pp. 177–78). Tov may be correct, though his position is based on inferences rather than on solid historical evidence. In a third section Tov rejects the local theory of texts developed by Albright, Cross, and others. In its place he presents a twofold scheme: so-called "vulgar" texts and "nonvulgar" texts. The pre-Samaritan, Samaritan, and Qumran practice groups of texts are characterized by a greater degree of scribal freedom in changing and correcting the text; thus they represent "vulgar" texts. The proto-Masoretic group and those Qumran texts close to the Septuagint exhibit less scribal freedom in altering the text. Therefore they are "nonvulgar" texts.

Chapter 4, "The Copying and Transmitting of the Biblical Text," contains a wealth of information, and would almost be worth the price of the entire book on its own. There is a section on the copying of the biblical text that includes a detailed discussion of scribal practices evidenced at Qumran, practices that are presumably similar to what scribes of the first temple period did (p. 201). A further section discusses possible scribal errors into four sub-categories: (1) minuses, (2) pluses, (3) changes, and (4) differences in sequence. Probably the strongest feature of this discussion is the wealth of examples offered for each category of potential error.

Chapter 5, "The Aim and Procedures of Textual Criticism," further develops Tov's early definitions of textual criticism (chap. 1). He sees textual criticism of the OT as different from textual criticism in general. There is no attempt to reconstruct the original text of the OT, primarily due to the difficulty of the task. He sees the aim of textual criticism as a more practical attempt to isolate variant readings and evaluate which of these is more likely original.

Chapter 6, "The Evaluation of Readings," is essentially devoted to a critique of the so-called "rules" of textual criticism (e.g. the more difficult reading is to be preferred). Tov feels that all such rules are too general and too easily misused. He advocates the use of common sense in deciding between variant readings. He summarizes his position as follows: "to some extent textual evaluation cannot be bound by any fixed rules. It is an art in the full sense of the word, a faculty which can be developed, guided by intuition based on wide experience" (p. 309).

One of the unique elements in Tov's monograph is his discussion of the relation between text criticism and literary criticism (chap. 7). He uses a combination of quan-

titative and qualitative criteria to distinguish between the two areas of study. "Large scale differences displaying a certain coherence" are dealt with under literary studies, while smaller variations that are of a more random character are dealt with in textual studies (p. 314). Tov recognizes the difficulty of distinguishing between these two groups of variant readings, but the need to do so is clear from a practical point of view. According to Tov, when dealing with textual differences, a scholar should arrive at a decision regarding the preferable reading. However, when dealing with presumed alternative literary readings, scholars should simply recognize their existence, but should not evaluate them as preferred or to be rejected (p. 348). This means in practice that a text critic needs to clearly differentiate between variant readings that are the result of scribal activity (they need to be evaluated as preferred or not) and text differences that are the result of (presumed) earlier editorial activity (they need only to be recognized).

Chapter 8 is devoted to conjectural emendation. Tov views as positive the fact that the use of emendation is less frequent today than in earlier times, but his discussion of the need for some use of emendation is helpful. He holds that the current availability of textual readings is only partial because of the accidental nature of manuscript preservation throughout history. What this means is that in some cases there will be no known record of the original or preferred reading in any textual witness. In those cases, judicious use of emendation may be resorted to. Indeed, Tov lists some cases of earlier emendations that are now supported by textual evidence from Qumran.

Tov's final chapter is devoted to a discussion of the two primary critical editions of the Hebrew Bible that are available today. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* is based on the Leningrad Codex, which is complete. The Hebrew University Bible Project is based on the Aleppo Codex, which unfortunately is not complete. Only the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah are currently available in the latter edition.

Other changes in the second edition include updating of bibliography and footnotes, correction of typographical errors, and changes in terminology and spelling. The major revision of bibliography (pp. 100–101) is the section devoted to the manuscripts found in the Judean Desert. A serious lack here is the failure to mention the new Eerdmans/Brill facsimile edition of *The Leningrad Codex* (1998).

Minor blemishes aside, Tov's work is massive in scope and clear in its explanations. This second edition will remain the preferred work for all who are engaged in serious text-critical work on the Hebrew Bible. It is also extremely suitable as a text for advanced courses in text criticism, although it would likely prove overwhelming for beginning students.

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Invitation to the Septuagint. By Karen Jobes and Moisés Silva. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, 351 pp., \$29.99.

The authors are to be commended for this anticipated contribution to the burgeoning field of Septuagint studies. A clear, comprehensive, and updated primer to the field has been needed for some time and this book satisfies those demands admirably. *Invitation to the Septuagint* will no doubt stand alongside Swete and Jellicoe's classic introductions in both importance and use for years to come.

The book is divided into three parts with 14 total chapters. Each chapter begins with an overview of its specific contents, and helpful bibliographic suggestions pertinent to that chapter's topic are provided at the end of each chapter, though this second practice is discontinued in part 3. Each part is intended to build on the previous one.

The beginner is gently exposed to the complicated field in part 1, where the history of the Septuagint is chronicled. After this initial foundation is laid, part 2 details areas where the Septuagint impacts biblical studies. The intermediate student will be fascinated by the authors' presentation of diverse Septuagintal issues such as the language of the text, the process of establishing its text, the value of the Septuagint in textual criticism, the impact archaeology has had on our understanding of the Septuagint, the relationship between the Septuagint and the NT, and the fundamental principles for interpreting the text itself.

Part 3 addresses the current state of Septuagint studies. This includes a wonderful chapter dedicated to the biographies of several pioneers who shaped the frontier of Septuagint field. Technical chapters on linguistic research and a history of the text's reconstruction may require subsequent readings to fully appreciate their value. Exposure to various theological implications arising from the Septuagint constitutes the final chapter.

Four helpful appendixes appear at the end of the book. Appendix A provides information about several organizations from around the world dedicated to various aspects of Septuagint research. Appendix B is a bibliography of important reference works. Appendix C is a valuable glossary of terms, and appendix D, which includes a handy table, identifies those verses where the versification between the English versions and the Septuagint differs.

My only critical observation relates to the absence of references to research from the book of Job. While it is unfair to expect any one book to cover all of the issues associated with this enormous field, especially an introductory book, and while it is true I am betraying my own research interests, the book of Job does offer some unique and important phenomena that are well-known in Septuagint circles and could certainly augment the value of this book. For example, the book of Job is one-sixth shorter in the Septuagint than in the Masoretic Text and has subsequently produced no small amount of research attempting to account for this. Alleged theological prejudices of the translator as well as his translation technique could have nicely augmented the textual and theological discussions in *Invitation*. The LXX's addition depicting Job as resurrected could be particularly illuminating in the authors' fourteenth chapter, "The Theological Development in the Hellenistic Age," which includes a subsection dedicated to "Eschatology and the Septuagint."

But this nibbling around the edges further demonstrates the overall impressiveness of the work. As the popularity of Septuagint studies continues to grow, I believe this book will become the standard textbook for courses on the Septuagint and as such will further stimulate interest in the field. I highly recommend it.

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Mission in the Old Testament: Israel as a Light to the Nations. By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000, 101 pp., \$9.99 paper.

"Probably the last thing a person is likely to think about in connection with the Old Testament is a missionary message to the Gentiles" (p. 7). Kaiser addresses such a view, arguing with characteristic clarity and concision that the OT should indeed be read as a missionary message to the nations.

Two fundamentally different views of mission are at issue here. Kaiser distinguishes them as "centripetal" and "centrifugal" witnessing. The former view understands Israel to have a passive, Zion-centered view of mission. It is, one could say, "come-and-see" witnessing. The latter view understands Israel to have an aggressive

missionary mandate, an outward-moving mission that one could term “go-and-tell” witnessing. Kaiser’s thesis is that “Centrifugal witnessing . . . is the role assigned to Israel in actively sharing with others the Man of Promise who was to come” (p. 9).

Chapters 1 and 2 unpack God’s plan and purpose for mission in the OT. Special attention is paid to the Abrahamic covenant (especially Gen 12:3), which Kaiser suggests could be considered a “Great Commission” of the OT (p. 7). The plan is that all of the nations will be blessed through the Seed, the Man of Promise who is to come. The purpose is best seen by examining some key missionary psalms (e.g. Psalms 67, 96, 117). Here Israel prays *for* the nations, proclaiming Yahweh *to* the nations, in order that Yahweh might receive praise *from* the nations.

Chapters 3 and 5 constitute case studies, as it were, of Kaiser’s thesis. In short order he recounts the stories of individual Gentiles who trusted in the Man of Promise. Jonah’s reluctant witness to Assyria is also retold as an example of centrifugal witnessing. Kaiser continues to build his thesis by looking at the centrifugal motif in the other prophets of Israel.

Chapter 4 examines the Isaianic call of Israel to be a light to the nations. Israel, he argues, constitutes part of the corporate term “Servant of the Lord.” They are therefore called to bring and establish justice to the nations as a covenant for the people and as a light for the Gentiles (Isa 42:1, 4, 6). This then sets the stage for the final chapter, in which Kaiser demonstrates that God’s missionary call to Paul was explicitly grounded in the OT. The Gentile mission, far from being *ab extra*, had always been at the very center of God’s purposes and prescriptions.

Kaiser has demonstrated, in a careful and powerful way, that mission is at the heart and core of the promise-plan of God, a truth that is often obscured or forgotten in contemporary discussions. This commendable emphasis, founded upon Kaiser’s exegetical rigor and theological analysis, constitutes the greatest strength of the book and will be helpful to students and scholars alike. Proper indexes, as well as a glossary, add to its usefulness.

I remain unconvinced, however, of the thesis that Israel received a missionary mandate—a proactive prescription—to take the Good News to the Gentiles. Many of the texts produced (with notable exceptions like Jonah and Psalm 67) fail to fall into the strict category of “prescription.” They seem to fit better into the categories of “prayers” for the nations, “promises” about the nations, or “pronouncements” over the nations.

While Kaiser maintains that the missionary mandate is consistent in the OT, he himself admits that it is “at times only rudimentarily” so (p. 82). Yet this seems to be a softening of his thesis that the theme of mission in the OT is a “driving passion throughout the entire Old Testament” (p. 7).

Despite these reservations, this volume remains a wonderfully accessible introduction to and exploration of the missiological promise-plan of God, and hence would serve well as a supplemental text in classes both on missions and the OT.

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The Bible in Cross-Cultural Perspective. By Jacob A. Loewen. Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2000, 334 + xiv pp., n.p.

This volume, Jacob Loewen’s final book, is “about discovering more of the message of the Bible through the eyes of peoples of different cultures” (p. 245).

An outstanding Bible translator, insightful anthropologist, and provocative thinker, Loewen, who served ten years as a Mennonite Brethren missionary among the tribal peoples of South America and 20 years as a translation consultant, divides his 20 chapters

into five sections. Three appendixes, three indexes, a bibliography, and a biography follow. To understand the perspective of the book, the best place to begin is the final chapter, entitled "The Bible in My Life" (pp. 245–55).

Each of the five sections begins with an introduction followed by from two to seven chapters. The first section, which bears the same title as the book itself, sets the tone for the entire volume. It is followed, in turn, by sections on the universe, God and the sacred, the significance of names, and, finally, some implications derived from a cross-cultural perspective.

The book is replete with cultural insights from the author's research and experience. Using numerous hymn-interest stories, Loewen demonstrates how one's cultural angle of vision influences one's interpretation of Scripture. His treatment of the manifestation of impersonal power through holiness, taboo, magic, and divination is illuminating. Well-documented charts and tables contribute immensely to the usefulness of the book. Yet, at times, the author seems to import into Scripture views that undermine both the authority and reliability of the Bible.

His overreaction seems to spring from his early training in a dictation view of the Bible, which he refers to as a "canned approach." Loewen appears to confuse the concept of revelation with the concept of illumination. From his field experience, he draws the conclusion that since the biblical writers received information in their interaction with various cultures through time, the possibility exists that continuing revelation can occur in postbiblical times through interaction with other cultures. In fact, on pages 252–53, he develops the concept of "ongoing revelation."

Loewen's experience portrays vividly the way in which a translator might find a more complete meaning or understanding, as the Holy Spirit illumines the text in the slow and painful process of taking the message from the source language and placing it into the target language. However, many aspects of Loewen's biblical interpretation appear to be strained at best and misguided at worst. He argues that just as the world view and the culture of the biblical writers changed over time, so did their understanding of God. Loewen's picture of the development of Abraham's understanding of God fits his argument only at the price of ignoring the overall evidence.

In another instance, Loewen views Israel as gaining from Egypt an understanding of the afterlife that included the survival of the soul and the possibility of rewards and punishment in the afterlife. He argues that this replaced the previous patriarchal understanding of Sheol as a dark place, far from God and without his praise, to which the animating spirit went when death occurred. However, Loewen's theory fails to explain why the picture that emerges in the OT is much more closely related to that of Mesopotamia than Egypt. While revelation is progressive and, indeed, may be culturally influenced, to maintain that it is culturally derived, as Loewen does, fails to do justice to the nature of revelation.

Although Loewen possesses an impressive knowledge of the factual content of Scripture, he appears to drive an unnecessary wedge between the testaments when he contrasts the focus of atonement for sin with the NT focus on forgiveness of sin (p. 29) without recognizing that the emphasis on forgiveness flows from the reality of atonement.

Despite its theological shortcomings, this book deserves to be read. Loewen's case for the superiority of dynamic-equivalence translations over against formal-correspondence translations is strong. His discussion of marriage customs and his treatment of demonic possession stretch the reader to think outside of his or her cultural box, whether or not one agrees with Loewen's conclusions. His withering critique of the "diminished God of Western Christianity" (p. 220), along with the corresponding tribalization of God and the resulting idolization of wealth, materialism, technology, and even the institutional Church, make for sober reflection.

While this book should be read with much discernment, the issues it raises are unavoidable in this era of a global Church. They demand a response. Even if the reader deems Loewen's response to be flawed or unacceptable, the challenge of responding in a truly biblical, yet culturally sensitive way remains.

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A Dictionary of the English Bible and Its Origins. By Alec Gilmore. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, 192 pp., \$19.95 paper.

According to the introduction, the author, who is a Baptist minister living in Sussex, England, aims to cover two subject areas: the original manuscripts of the Bible ("their production, compilation and recognition," p. 8) and the story of English translations of the Bible. "Instead of simply telling the story," the book "offers a work of reference" (p. 8). The author also claims in the introduction that an aim of the book is to help Christians bewildered by the recent proliferation of translations. All of this adds up to a worthy enterprise, but a preliminary question arises: Is a dictionary of brief entries the best format by which to achieve these goals?

The actual entries fall mainly into six categories. I myself cluster them into two groups. One cluster is entries for places (e.g. St. Petersburg, Russia; Rheims, France), for people (e.g. John Porter, Norman McLean, Kenneth Willis Clark) and curiosities (e.g. Murderer's Bible; Wicked Bible; translating the idea of God's forgiveness as God's "spitting on the ground" in the African language of Shilluk; Breeches Bible). Of much greater value is a cluster of entries falling into the three areas of English Bible translations, original manuscripts of the Bible and their transmission (e.g. entries for *Textus Receptus*, Masoretic Text, glosses, codex), and textual and translation issues (e.g. vocalization, scribal changes, corruption, conjectural emendation).

There is, indeed, a need to have a repository of information on the matters that the book covers. But I concluded my reading of the book questioning whether a dictionary is the best possible format for the venture. In defense of a dictionary, an alphabetically arranged collection of brief entries allows for ready reference if one desires information on a specific and already known topic. But for a coherent explanation of such topics as the history of English Bible translation or the story of the ancient biblical manuscripts/copies and their preservation or the issues facing translators, a carefully indexed anthology of essays would prove more helpful. Some (not all) of the material covered in the book could be more insightfully explicated in a format that the author rejects in the introduction, namely "telling the story" of these matters.

Selectivity, of course, becomes crucial with any dictionary. The virtue of this book is its comprehensiveness. Every known English translation, for example, finds its own cozy nest. But the price tag that this comprehensiveness carries is that no translation receives the requisite length for a substantial treatment. The author states as a goal that the data he has collected on English translations will help readers decide what translations are best (p. 8), but the brevity and self-contained nature of the entries make it doubtful that the book meets the standard to which the author aspires. Furthermore, much of the data is so technical as to be beyond the grasp of the layperson. The question of audience is a knotty one. The book is sufficiently technical that the layperson will struggle with much of the material, but the entries are so brief as to be unnecessary for the specialist.

My muted enthusiasm for this book is less a comment on the book itself than on the genre to which it belongs. We belong to the information age in which brief "bytes" of

information are much in vogue. But we need to ask questions about the value of all this information. As long ago as 1934 we find T. S. Eliot lamenting, "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge, /Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?" I am reminded, too, of Neil Postman's critique of television news that bombards us with information about which we are expected to do nothing. What is the usefulness, I found myself asking, of an entry on Slimbridge, Gloucestershire ("birthplace of William Tynedale," p. 157), or Glasgow, Scotland ("birthplace of James Moffatt," p. 77)? How does it help to understand the Bible's origin and English translations to know the birthplace, education (including information about "a Double First in Greats" at University College, Oxford), and career appointments of Charles H. Dodd (pp. 67–68)? Entries such as this are abundant, and they reflect an attitude toward what knowledge is most worth having that belongs to an information age.

This is not to say that Gilmore always remains preoccupied with the factual level, though that is the general tenor of the book (perhaps appropriately so for a dictionary). There are interpretive assessments as well. Yet the credibility of these judgments is sometimes undermined by what appeared to me to be somewhat naïve statements (such as that the Living Bible came to have "a wide circulation and considerable popularity among young people, p. 163 [italics added]) and questionable conclusions (such as that the NIV is "a verbal equivalence translation" and that among "its weaknesses are that it is very literal," p. 118).

I wish to credit the book for what is good in it. Compiled by one person, it is the result of immense and painstaking research. If one can get past all those place names and persons that contribute little to the topics announced in the book's title, one will find a wealth of useful information about texts and English translations, as well as definitions and explanations of technical terms related to those topics. For someone with only passing knowledge of the intricacies of textual scholarship and translation, the book is a "fun browse," filled with interesting and informative bits of information.

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An Introduction to Theological Research: A Guide for College and Seminary Students.
By Cyril J. Barber and Robert M. Krauss, Jr. New York: University Press of America, 2000, 172 pp., \$24.50.

The authors cite a threefold aim for the *Guide*: (1) Reduce research time; (2) enable access to the kind of information that yields quality research; and (3) generate independent researchers. The intended audience for the *Guide* includes students in Bible and Christian liberal arts colleges as well as seminarians.

The approach is to describe various research tools, making comments on strengths and weaknesses. Then, each chapter concludes with an assignment designed to familiarize the researcher with the tools that have been considered.

After an introductory chapter, the *Guide* presents three chapters on general reference works. The first chapter treats religious and biblical reference works, including major encyclopedias of religion as well as encyclopedias and dictionaries of the Bible. In chap. 2, the *Guide* addresses general reference works on biblical archaeology, biblical theology, and systematic theology. In this chapter, the *Guide* cites works by evangelicals and Roman Catholics. In chap. 3 the *Guide* considers interdisciplinary research. Realizing that theological research may take the student into other fields of study, the *Guide* culls through works on education, history and biography, missions, philosophy and ethics, sociology, and psychology.

In chap. 5 the authors describe basic reference tools for Bible study. These include atlases, English Bible concordances, and multivolume sets of commentaries.

The *Guide* is arranged from more general reference works to the more specialized. Beginning with chaps. 6–9, the *Guide* focuses on tools for word studies. This block of chapters, the authors note, is concerned with “the methodology by which accurate ideas of words and their meaning(s) may be obtained” (p. 76). Accordingly, chap. 6 enumerates the major concordances, including English, Hebrew, and Greek. Concordances that access both the LXX and the NT are mentioned. Chapter 7 lists, describes and evaluates the major Hebrew and Greek lexical tools. The Greek tools indexed cover both the classical and Hellenistic periods of Greek literature.

Chapters 8 (OT) and 9 (NT) bear on the process of word studies. Using the tools mentioned for the appropriate testament, the *Guide* advocates attention to etymology (the origin and development of a word), usage (analysis of occurrences), and verification (examining one’s findings against those of specialists).

Chapter 10 deals with online searching. This excellent chapter shows the researcher where to find and how to access books, dissertations, articles, theological resources, World-Wide-Web resources, mailing lists, and Bible software.

The final block of chapters, 10–15, is concerned with more specific resource tools. In these chapters, indexes and abstracts as well as bibliographies are noted and arranged by topic. The last chapter deals with accessing unpublished materials, including papers read at scholarly conferences.

The major strengths of the *Guide* are the breadth and quality of the reference works cited. Students in Bible and Christian liberal-arts schools will indeed find reference works that will result in high-quality work. Another strength, as indicated, is the chapter dealing with online searching.

One caution may be mentioned. The material on the use of language tools for word studies should be used with care by those without experience in the original languages. Beyond that, the *Guide* is an excellent resource for up-to-date tools on biblical research.

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Numerical Secrets of the Bible: Rediscovering the Bible Codes. By Casper J. Labuschagne. North Richland Hills: Bibal, 2000, xv + 192 pp., \$19.95 paper.

The present volume is what the author describes as “a total rewrite” of an earlier Dutch version that appeared in 1992 under the title *Vertellen met Getallen: Functie en symboliek van getallen in de bijbelse oudheid*. In spite of its potentially misleading subtitle this work does not promote the popular “Bible Code” theory that claims to find in biblical literature encoded messages pertaining to future events or personalities (an evaluation of which may be found in my essay in *JETS* 43 [2000] 619–36). In fact Labuschagne expresses a negative reaction to such approaches (e.g. pp. 156–57), arguing instead that numerical structuring of biblical writings was simply one of the compositional techniques utilized by biblical authors. By using certain numbers these writers qualitatively regulated their words, sentences, and even verses. This resulted in a very close relationship between content and form. The thesis of the book is developed along the following lines.

According to Labuschagne a largely overlooked or ignored aspect of biblical compositions is that they were forged on the basis of specific numbers that provide the patterns for their structural organization. To refer to the study of such patterns Labuschagne uses such terms as “numerical structural analysis,” “logotechnical analysis,”

or “quantitative structural analysis.” Symbolic numbers used in the Bible include not only such familiar numbers as 40, 12, and 7, but also certain combinations of these and other numbers (and their multiples). For example, the pattern $7 + 3 + 1 = 11$ (or $7 + 4 = 11$) is important to the structure of the Pentateuch, where the enumeration of seven items is sometimes followed by an enumeration of three items dealing with a related topic, which is then followed by a single related item, yielding a total of eleven items. The number 11 is especially significant, being the sum of 4 (the number of extensiveness) and 7 (the number of fullness). The numbers 17 and 26 (and 23 and 32) are also important, occurring with high frequency in the Pentateuch. These numbers reflect the numerical values of forms of the divine name. But since they are also the numerical value of the Hebrew word for “glory” (spelled either ככר or ככוד), they provide a way of emphasizing the divine glory in certain biblical texts. Following the Austrian scholar Claus Schedl, Labuschagne also stresses such devices as the *minor tetraktys*, which consists of 55 words where one component has 23 words and the other 32. (The term is derived from Pythagorean geometry; the number 55 is the sum of the numbers 1 through 10.) The *major tetraktys* (54, or the sum of the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 27) is found a number of times in Deuteronomy. Other significant patterns include the following: the Pentateuch model ($4 + 1 = 5$), the Decalogue model ($4 + 6 = 10$), the *YHWH-ʿechad* model ($26 + 13 = 39$), the numerical *menorah* structure (a central item flanked on each side by three other items), and the balance model (e.g. 26 words + 3 words + 26 words, as in Ps 23:4). In some passages of the Bible, certain keywords (e.g. *David*, *Abraham*, *Moses*) determine the number of words that are used in a text. Throughout the book Labuschagne discusses many biblical passages that according to him are illumined by an awareness of the role that numerical strategies played in the composition of the text. The numerical architecture of the biblical text thus serves to underscore the artful quality of these writings.

Although Labuschagne is an established biblical scholar who taught OT studies for many years in South African and Dutch universities, his views on this matter seem contrived to a surprising degree. I will mention only what seem to me to be the most obvious problems for his theory. First, there are issues of text criticism. Labuschagne’s approach requires an acceptance of the Masoretic Hebrew text and a minimization (or suppression) of textual difficulties found in that text form. But if the MT has sustained any significant degree of textual damage due to the transmission process, the sorts of mathematical manipulations that Labuschagne promotes automatically become suspect. While I am willing to agree that the MT is a relatively well-preserved form of the OT text, it is nonetheless clear from the evidence of Qumran and the ancient versions of the Hebrew Bible that at many points emendation of the MT is required. Labuschagne, however, seems to ignore such evidence and to work almost entirely with the MT alone. This is a fatal flaw that calls into question the very foundation of his work. Second, there is an inherent unlikeliness to the theory. That the biblical writers were so preoccupied with numerical structural patterns as to engage in what amounts to playing vast number games with the content of their material requires more justification than this volume presents, in spite of the author’s belief that he has presented a “massive amount of evidence” in support of his views (cf. pp. xv, 120). At too many points the evidence cited appears to be arbitrary. Third, this theory has an esoteric dimension to it. The recovery of such hidden numerical patterns in the Bible is so complex that only the most elite investigators are capable of recovering such features. In fact this is an objection that Labuschagne anticipates and tries, unsuccessfully in my view, to answer (e.g. pp. 3, 94–96).

Clearly, numbers play a significant role in biblical compositions. However, that their role is as extensive as Labuschagne maintains, or that they work in the complex manner which he suggests, or that many of the alleged combinations of numbers are

anything other than contrived or coincidental, is highly questionable. Unfortunately, this is not a book I can recommend.

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Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's Sign-Acts. By Kelvin G. Friebel. JSOTSup 283. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999, 535 pp., \$90.00.

The contents of this volume represent a major revision and updating of Kelvin Friebel's dissertation completed ten years ago under the supervision of Michael V. Fox at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The discussion commences with a theoretical discussion of prophetic sign-acts, a designation Friebel applies to "all the nonverbal behaviors (i.e. bodily movements, gestures and paralinguage) whose primary purpose was communicative and interactive" (p. 14). His preference for this designation over the more conventional "symbolic action" permits him to include in the discussion actions like the clapping of hands, which, when performed by Ezekiel in particular, conveys a message. Friebel restricts his analysis to the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, because they contain the bulk of the accounts of communicative nonverbal behavior performed by the prophets, and in so doing provide paradigms for interpreting others' nonverbal prophetic activity.

In his superb opening analysis Friebel argues that sign-acts reported in Jeremiah and Ezekiel were actually performed before their respective audiences. Of especially critical significance is his challenge to the longstanding "sympathetic magical" view that prophetic words and nonverbal actions possessed inherently efficacious power, that is, once uttered/enacted they actually set in motion the events described or depicted. To the contrary, the author argues convincingly that the function of prophetic sign-acts was rhetorical. Along with many other rhetorical strategies available to them (e.g. woe speeches, disputations, metaphorical utterances), prophets employed sign-acts not only to arrest their audiences' attention, but also to transform their thinking and their behavior. The point of these actions was not to set in motion specific events, but to *persuade* the people to abandon their deluded perceptions of present and future reality and to accept the divine verdict concerning their own sinfulness and their inevitable doom, unless of course they would respond to the message conveyed. Friebel makes his case primarily on the basis of the biblical evidence, but he buttresses it with many citations of numerous ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean examples in which idiosyncratic nonverbal actions were performed with communicative and interactive intent.

The bulk of the volume (pp. 79–369) is taken up with a detailed analysis of each attested sign-act in Jeremiah and Ezekiel (eight in Jeremiah and eight in Ezekiel). The sign acts are divided into three groups: the majority performed prior to the fall of Jerusalem in 586 BC (pp. 79–314); those performed within the immediate context of the fall of the city (pp. 314–51); and those performed after the fall (pp. 351–69). In each case Friebel begins by discussing the communicative meaning (message) of the sign-act, and then moves to a consideration of its rhetorical qualities. The latter are explored according to the four elements in the process of persuasion: (1) strategies to seize and hold the *attention* of the audience; (2) strategies to enhance the audience's *comprehension* of the message; (3) strategies to encourage *acceptance* of the message, that is to alter behaviors and attitudes; and (4) strategies ensure *retention/remembrance* of the message.

In chaps. 3 and 4 Friebel offers a synthetic review of Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's sign-acts as nonverbal communication. In the former he concludes that the prophets' nonverbal actions were neither ecstatic nor pathological experiences, but intentional behavior designed to communicate a message to their audiences and thereby to change the people's spiritual disposition and behavior. As rhetors, Jeremiah and Ezekiel functioned prophetically. However, the messages of their sign-acts, which consisted either of body movements or paralanguage, were not intrinsic to the actions; on the contrary, the manner of coded meaning ranged from iconic/representational to arbitrary/figurative.

In the final chapter Friebel provides an overview of the persuasive process in Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's ministries. First he summarizes the rhetorical situation, pointing out that in the midst of the Judahites' hopelessness these two prophets seek to evoke change by exposing the people's illusions of innocence and security, declaring Yahweh's real disposition toward them, and declaring the required response to the current theological/spiritual crisis. Second, he discusses how these objectives have been pursued rhetorically by deliberate actions to secure the people's attention, the performance of ambiguous actions that drew the audiences in and created the psychological framework for the communication of the intended message, the presentation of incentives to acceptance of the message (threats of punishment and promise of reward), and the adoption of tactics that would guarantee that the message would not soon be forgotten. Finally, he considers the audiences' response to the sign-acts of Jeremiah and Ezekiel and surveys the evidence for their rhetorical effectiveness/ineffectiveness. Friebel concludes that these prophets were largely unsuccessful in immediately persuading their respective audiences to alter their illusory beliefs and rebellious behavior. But he does not blame the prophets' failure on their "lack of suasive intent or techniques," but on "the resilience of the people's beliefs" (p. 465).

The significance that I as reviewer place on Friebel's analysis of prophetic sign-acts is evident in my own work. I was fortunate to have had access to the study when I was writing my commentary on the book of Ezekiel (NICOT). At that time I discovered it to be an invaluable resource not only for the general perspectival assistance Friebel provides in interpreting the sign-acts as rhetorical events, but also for the exegetical nuggets he has provided along the way. Friebel is exhaustive in his research, and always fair in his presentation of competing opinions. While we do not agree on every detail, in the end his judgments are sound and effectively expressed. It is difficult to criticize this work. If anything, one may express slight frustration over the organization and form of presentation, which has resulted in considerable redundancy. Ideas raised earlier keep surfacing, and then are summarized again at the end. But this feature is reflective of the thoroughness with which Friebel works and results in a more valuable reference tool. One does not need to read the entire volume to learn from his insights on specific passages. I for one am extremely grateful that this work completed ten years ago has now been updated and made available to a wider audience.

One final note: Friebel rightly concludes that in the immediate instance Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's rhetorical efforts appear to have failed. The people of Jerusalem (Jeremiah's audience) did not alter their beliefs or their ways, and in the end the city fell to the Babylonians. And as one reads the book of Ezekiel, one searches in vain for any sympathetic response among the exiles (Ezekiel's audience) to his rhetorical efforts, whether verbal or nonverbal (cf. 33:30–33). Yet from the perspective of subsequent decades, there is indeed evidence of response, especially to the preaching of Ezekiel. How else does one account for the fact that, although the Judeans were exiled in 598 and 586 for their fossilized hearts, expressed in pervasive spiritual recalcitrance and ethical infidelity (cf. Ezek 2:3–8), when Cyrus issued the decree in 538 BC for Judeans

to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple and the community of faith, more than 40,000 orthodox Yahwists returned (Ezra 2:64)? From where did they come? In the absence of alternative evidence, one may reasonably attribute the spiritual revival in Babylon at least in part to the preaching of Ezekiel. In the end, the events he had predicted through oral declaration and nonverbal actions actually happened, and when they did, the people (his audience) knew not only that a prophet had been in their midst (Ezek 2:5; 33:33; cf. Jer 28:9); they also acknowledged the person and presence of Yahweh (Ezek 33:29).

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Jesus Outside the New Testament: An Introduction to the Ancient Evidence. By Robert E. Van Voorst. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xiv + 248 pp., \$22.00 paper.

Van Voorst's knowledge of the classical sources—Thallos, Pliny the Younger, Suetonius, Tacitus, Mara bar Serapion, Lucian of Samosata, and Celsus—is considerable. His reasons for Suetonius's "Chrestus" being identified with the NT's Jesus Christ are good. Why are there not more classical references to Jesus? First, he observes, the works of Roman historians who lived with Jesus or during the next century have almost completely perished. He says that scholarship has concluded that Jesus did exist (G. A. Wells notwithstanding).

For Jewish sources he examines the Dead Sea Scrolls (Jesus not mentioned, he says), rabbinic traditions that Jesus was a magician and deceiver, and the medieval Toledoth Yeshua. His treatment of Josephus is strong, suggesting that he was an independent witness for Jesus' existence. The passage in connection with James's murder is undisputed. The primary mention, the *Testimonium Flavium*, he thinks was originally a neutral statement acknowledging Jesus' miracles, his condemnation to the cross by the Jewish leaders with Pilate, and his followers' continued existence. (The competing idea, that the *Testimonium Flavium* was a negative evaluation of Jesus, requires many unlikely textual emendations.)

I cannot agree with his discussion of "Jesus in the sources of the canonical gospels" (chap. 4). He writes, "Our task will be . . . to discern what these [gospel] sources can tell us about the historical Jesus" (p. 136). Implicit in his approach is that the finished Gospels do not necessarily bear a true witness to an authentic historical Jesus. Instead, the implication is that Jesus' works/words, now found in the Gospels, have been embellished for the early church's needs. Indeed, he says that "while judging the authenticity of canonical gospel [Jesus'] sayings is difficult enough, judging the authenticity of the *agrapha* [sayings of Jesus that went unwritten in the canonical gospels] is significantly more challenging" (p. 185). At the very least, he has not repudiated the Jesus Seminar, with its negative verdict on the majority of statements Jesus uttered according to the Gospels.

Another problem is that the author appears to think Gnosticism is (was) not heretical (pp. 186–88, 203). Van Voorst discusses the question "Was Jesus a Cynic?" (that is, a follower of the Greek philosophical Cynic school that developed from fifth-century BC Stoicism, a theory advocated by some at the Jesus Seminar) and arrives at a negative conclusion. However, if the Gospels were accepted as authentically true records for the historical Jesus, such questions would not be asked or debated. His presentation is useful, though, for summarizing the current trends in mainstream religious thought. His final statement is, "Our study of Jesus outside the New Testament points at the end

of the day to Jesus inside the New Testament” (p. 217). In sum, the book is valuable as an up-to-date look at the classical sources, and it is helpful for showing where mainstream NT scholarship is going.

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Reading and Writing in the Time of Jesus. By Alan Millard. The Biblical Seminar 69. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000, 288 pp., n.p. paper.

There is some overlap between this recent offering from Alan Millard and Bruce Metzger's *The Text of the New Testament*, for both describe the process of writing that led to the NT manuscripts. This book also enjoys a symbiotic relationship with Stanley Stowers's *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity*: Millard addresses the mechanics, while Stowers provided samples of the final product. However, Millard's purpose is quite particular: he argues that it is reasonable to assume that written reports of Jesus' actions and dialogue existed even within Jesus' own lifetime, and that these notes could have been circulated during the decades between his public ministry and the production of the NT autographa. That being the case, revisionist allegations, such as those emanating from the Jesus Seminar, would be countered.

So, how does one make a case that something that is not extant actually existed at one time? The task is hardly remote in principle from the heart of NT scholarship, for after all, hypothetical Q is often taken for granted on some level or another. Millard argues that, given the array of formal and informal writing samples that survived from the ancient Mediterranean world, written records of pericopes that could have reinforced the popular memory of Jesus' ministry during that “oral” period of transmission in the first century should actually be considered to be routine.

Millard builds his case with restraint and relish. His discussion of writing mechanics during the three millennia before Christ (chap. 1) is followed by presentations on written Christian records, canonical and otherwise (chap. 2), and on the influence of Christian tradition upon writing conventions—even to the point of enhancing popular preference for the codex over the traditional papyrus or parchment scroll format (chap. 3). He then narrows his scope geographically, homing in on materials from Herodian-era Palestine, including Semitic, Hellenistic, and Latin samples (chaps. 4–5). He holds to a standard view regarding the multilingualism of Levantine societies, citing recent discoveries of bilingual coinage, papyrus deeds, and even informal inscriptions on pottery to support the view.

But with chaps. 6–7 Millard draws his circle in very tightly. He shows that even “oral” societies held written records in some regard, and despite the well-known Jewish aversion to committing traditional teachings to print so as not to rival the Law (they were to be committed to memory and recited only), there were exceptions—noteworthy exceptions. The Qumran community would still produce a Temple Scroll; Papias would still acknowledge that he had written records to fall back on when “the living voice” of Jewish eyewitnesses was not available for consultation. Even the early Jewish Christian church, *per* Acts 15, elected to disseminate its judgments in print. “[A]vailable literary references show that writing in Greek, Aramaic and Hebrew was widespread *and could be found at all levels of society*” (p. 210, emphasis mine). Millard has placed the shoe on the other foot of would-be critics.

Such an ambitious task—arguing for something we all know is not materially available—does the good service of putting a reader through one's paces. This book will

refresh one's terminology and concepts, and even its pictures—e.g. depicting small notebooks of wax-inlaid ivory pages that were used for erasable personal notes—keep our imagination of daily life in NT times quite vivid. It paints a picture of a once-living environment none of us today has lived in, thereby allowing the reader to deduce what might have been normal in the ancient setting.

But does Millard's argument make a difference? On the negative side, we should remember that even written notations originating from Jesus' public ministry could not have prevented the early Church from manufacturing authentic-sounding, yet fictional, accounts of Jesus, had they been determined to do so. This is the point Millard wants to combat most particularly, *contra* the Jesus Seminar. Yet even the material recovery of authentic notes on pericopes or *logia* today would fail to settle the issue, as the ubiquity of late-20th-century urban myths implies. If it can be produced today, it could have been done then as well.

On the positive side, though, Millard upholds the scenario of the honest pursuit of "true truth" (as Francis Schaeffer called it) in the first century. Convictions about the propriety of historical accuracy are not the unique property of modern intellectuals, and antiquity does not equal inaccuracy. Millard nicely documents the fact that even common workers in ancient societies exhibited multilingual reading and writing abilities, and these were employed for various purposes.

This volume could be a fine tool for seminarians, and it would make a suitable auxiliary text for upper-level undergraduate classes on the Gospels or epistles. Whether one is convinced by the argument or not, Millard has beautifully described and depicted the state of the art of writing production that made the NT autographa a possibility.

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Israel in the Development of Christian Thought. By Ronald E. Diprose. Rome: Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano, 2000, 200 pp., n.p.

The author is the academic dean at the Istituto Biblico Evangelico Italiano. His training includes degrees from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and the Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, Louvain, Belgium.

The book is an excellent development of especially patristic material on the denigration of Israel and how the Church replaced Israel theologically. The author accurately sums up his findings as follows: "We saw that in the early centuries of the Christian era this neglect was linked with what has become known as *replacement theology*. According to this concept all that formerly pertained to ethnic Israel now pertains to the Church. In spite of the fact that Israel's status as an elect people was confirmed by Paul in Romans 9–11, the view that the Church had completely replaced Israel in God's plan became the dominant opinion in post-apostolic Christendom. Some Church Fathers went further when they affirmed that the Church had always been the *true* Israel of which physical Israelites were but the visible sign" (p. 175). From these conclusions he develops three principles, which actually are better viewed as assumptions to inform his work rather than implications from his conclusions. These principles are: (1) "Failure to reflect seriously on Israel, in light of all the relevant biblical data, has serious consequences for the entire enterprise of Christian theology" (p. 176); (2) "Christian theology must be based on sound hermeneutic principles which presuppose the Church's essential relationship with Israel" (p. 177); and (3) "Christian

theology cannot afford to ignore the momentous events of the twentieth century which first threatened the very existence of the Jewish people and subsequently secured a homeland for them. The response of Christian theology to these developments has been mixed. While there have been some proposals for a post-holocaust theology, *replacement theology* and/or its effects to continue to influence much systematic theology” (p. 178).

In a context of the *shoah* and the rebirth of the modern state of Israel, he makes the point that one does not need to fear being labeled a dispensationalist to see “Israel” as “a specific ethnic group which believed itself to be united by a covenant with Yahweh, the only true God” (p. 7). A brief survey of the OT in ten pages supports the point that Israel is a unique people. This survey is extremely brief treating the biblical passages on a popular level, with no evidence of ancient Near Eastern material. Another brief survey of NT material, but primarily Romans 9–11 (in eight pages), also supports the point of Israel’s uniqueness. These sections are sufficient to support his claim of Israel’s uniqueness. The author’s Romans 11 development of a future salvation for Israel sets an interpretative benchmark from which the patristic comments come under critique.

In chap. 2 Diprose looks briefly at the major texts where replacement theology is claimed to be found—especially Romans 9–11, and, more briefly, John 8:30–59; Acts 15:1–18, Gal 3:26–29; 6:16; Eph 2:11–22; Heb 8:1–13; 1 Pet 2:4–10; Phil 3:4–9; and 1 Thess 2:15–16—and concludes that they do not teach such a view. The depth of this coverage is not one of an extensive commentary, but the development is adequate to develop the point and helps the work keep a narrow and helpful focus.

In chap. 3 the development of replacement theology in postapostolic times is deftly developed. This chapter is where the value of the work is to be prized as making a significant contribution to this field of study. While Diprose does not mention that the Church is first called “Israel” in the *Shepherd of Hermes*, the route to diminish Israel is nicely drawn through: *The Epistle of Barnabas*’ disinheriting Israel; Justin Martyr’s and Origen’s claims that the Church is the “true Israel”; Irenaeus’s claim that Israel’s promises are for the Church; Tertullian’s answer that Israel must serve the Church (from an allegorical interpretation of Gen 25:21–23 that the older must serve the younger); and the later patristic and Constantinian anti-Semitic political policy on the grounds that Jews are Christ-killers. Such anti-Semitic remarks, flawed logic, and faulty exegesis make me embarrassed about patristic views, but Diprose accurately characterizes these works.

Chaps. 4 and 5 apply these views in the theological disciplines of ecclesiology and eschatology. The valuable developments for ecclesiology are especially Cyprian’s framing the catholic leadership and sacraments in priestly and sacrificial ways. Additionally, when Constantine moved the political center to Constantinople, it elevated the felt need for the church of Rome to pick up some of the political power in Rome. Diprose’s jump to Westminster is a bit too quick without much of the Reformation ecclesiology being developed. The valuable developments for eschatology are especially the demise of chiliasm (1000-year kingdom) by the allegorical interpretation of Origen and Augustine. It was Augustine who was most influential for identifying the Church as the kingdom, thus replacing Israel’s kingdom hope.

I recommend the work to anyone who wishes to study the relationship of Israel and the Church, especially for the analysis in chapter three, which accurately unpacks the postapostolic history of replacement theology.

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New Wine into Fresh Wineskins: Contextualizing the Early Christian Confessions. By Richard N. Longenecker. Peabody: Hendricksen, 1999, x + 207 pp., \$14.95.

The previous works of distinguished NT scholar Richard Longenecker should already be well known to readers of *JETS*. In this volume Longenecker works out a thesis he first argued in a 1993 paper before the American Theological Society. He uses the new wine saying of Jesus (Mark 2:22 and parallels) as a metaphor for his thesis that the NT is both a contextualization of previously existing Christian confessions and a model for the contextualization of the gospel message today. There are three parts to the book. The first identifies the NT material Longenecker and others view as dependent on early confessions and presents a synthesis of that material. The second analyzes how the confessional material is contextualized in the NT. The third presents various models of contextualization today and makes suggestions as to how a contextualized incarnational theology should proceed. The book also contains endnotes, select bibliography, and indexes of modern authors and ancient sources.

Longenecker has produced a well-written work, one whose argument is quite clear. Introductions, summaries, and a concluding epilogue insure that the main point is unmistakable to the reader. Part 1 is a particularly helpful introduction to the widespread literature on the form-critical analysis of putative confessional materials in the NT. The survey and evaluation of various models of contextualization in Part 3 is also useful. Whichever model one adopts, it seems clear that contextualization of the gospel is necessary if the Church is to be faithful to the mandate of its Lord to disciple all the nations.

But perhaps some readers will agree with this reviewer that the case in Parts 1 and 2 for a plethora of confessional material throughout the NT is not convincing. One wonders about the reliability of the form-critical criteria which are utilized to isolate the three main types of confessional material. Single-statement affirmations in narratives may more likely reflect a historical event than a theological confession. Formulaic prose portions and poetic portions may be due more to an author's characteristic style than to use of previously existing confessions. But Longenecker largely accepts the reliability of these criteria and therefore takes what might be described as a maximalistic view of confession in the NT. However, it seems to me that many of the passages accepted by this school of thought as confessional are just not that clearly so.

Three questions occur as one reflects on this viewpoint. First, were the NT materials so much inspired and shaped by putative early confessions as those early confessions were inspired and shaped by the NT materials (p. 110)? Evidence for the former seems to pale when compared with evidence for the latter. Second, was Luke's Gospel shaped so much by early confessions as it was by the redemptive-historical events transmitted to him by the written and oral traditions to which he alludes in his prologue (p. 109)? In other words, is it all that clear that the sources to which Luke alludes were confessional in nature? Third, if as Longenecker admits one must remain agnostic about the historical provenance of the putative early confessions behind so much of the NT (pp. 26, 47), does this not hinder our utilization of the NT today as a model for the contextualization of the gospel for specific receptor cultures? If the ancient historical situation is unknown, how can the NT function clearly as a model for contemporary historical situations? No doubt contextualization is crucial for mission today, but if Longenecker's case for the NT as a contextualization of early confessions is not convincing, the use of the NT as a model for contextualization today becomes a more complicated matter.

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Serve the Community of the Church: Christians as Leaders and Ministers. By Andrew D. Clarke. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, vii + 305 pp., \$30.00.

Clarke is lecturer in NT at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. A previous book (*Secular and Christian Leadership in Corinth: A Sociohistorical and Exegetical Study of 1 Corinthians 1–6* [Brill, 1993]) has adequately equipped Clarke to offer the broader and more general treatment found in the present volume. Clarke compares leadership in Paul's churches with leadership as conceived and exercised in the dominant culture of Greco-Roman antiquity. Although the book contains two major sections (dealing with secular and Christian leadership), Clarke's own methodology prepares the reader for three levels of analysis: (1) leadership in Greco-Roman society; (2) the influence of society's leadership values on Paul's churches; and (3) Paul's response to problems that arose from the appropriation of leadership values from the dominant culture.

Clarke excels in the first half of the book (chaps. 1–6), where he carefully delineates the ways in which leadership was envisioned and exercised in five social spheres: (1) the Greco-Roman city; (2) the Roman colony; (3) voluntary associations; (4) the family and household; and (5) the Jewish synagogue. In each case the reader encounters a helpful overview of current scholarship, along with numerous citations from primary sources in support of the author's thesis. Thus, for example, the extensive inscription from an early second-century burial society in Lanuvium, Italy (*CIL* 14.2.112) and Trajan's letter to Pliny forbidding a guild of firemen (*Ep.* 10.34) illustrate the social and political dimensions, respectively, of voluntary associations.

Clarke demonstrates that leadership in urban antiquity was not based upon proven skills, formal training, or other qualifications familiar to modern Westerners. Rather, the importance of public honor, in conjunction with the widespread practice of patronage, generated an approach to leadership that focused almost exclusively on a single qualification: social status. Positions of leadership were acquired "on the basis of honour and wealth" (p. 148). This was true not only among the small percentage of the empire's elites who had access to civic honors. The same approach to leadership was replicated among groups at the lower echelons of the social hierarchy (e.g. voluntary associations and Jewish synagogues). Clarke summarizes, "Graeco-Roman society was highly stratified, and at all levels of the community life people recognized and elevated the *status quo* whereby those of comparatively greater rank and social standing received due deference and honour" (pp. 146–47).

Chapter 7 considers the degree to which the five groups (above) influenced the social organization of early Christianity. The discussion is illuminating, and Clarke takes a rather conservative approach to the idea of outside influence. On some issues, however, the treatment could have been more thorough. The section on families and households lacks extended commentary on two crucial aspects the church family metaphor: the elevation of the patriarch to the divine realm (i.e. God as "Father") and the ubiquitous use of sibling terminology in Christian literature. The use of sibling terms for leaders and congregants alike in Christian writings "leveled the playing field" in such a way as to suggest that the social model of the Roman family could only be adopted with significant modification by Paul and his followers. I would also distinguish more sharply between the associations and the churches. The relative scarcity of kinship terminology in extant sources documenting the associations shows that the Christians' self-awareness of their communities as surrogate families was unparalleled among the voluntary associations.

Clark proceeds to survey the Pauline corpus (Ephesians, Colossians, and the Pastorals are noticeably absent), persuasively arguing that the social-status approach to leadership that characterized the surrounding world found its way into Paul's churches. The treatments of the letters are unfortunately, but necessarily, brief. As we might expect, the analysis of 1 Corinthians proves the most satisfying, since it contains

more social realia than the other epistles and was the subject of Clarke's earlier book. I was surprised, however, given the up-to-date treatment of secondary sources at every turn in Clarke's argument, to find no mention of Dale Martin's important book, *The Corinthian Body* (Yale, 1995). There is much in Martin's volume to complement and buttress Clarke's treatment of 1 Corinthians.

The book concludes with an analysis of Paul's own view of leadership. Clarke refreshingly refutes postmodern readings that find the apostle utilizing his position of authority in a repressive, controlling manner. Understood within his own cultural context, Paul rejects the practice of identifying community leaders based solely on social status. Instead "Paul views Christian leaders . . . as those who serve" (p. 243).

I can commend Clarke's book for use in a variety of settings. Students of NT ecclesiology will obviously benefit from the volume. The layout of the volume renders it both accessible to the initial reader and useful for later consultation. Judiciously arranged footnotes and bibliography offer a wealth of resource material. Persons who teach pastoral theology, church growth, and leadership theory would also do well carefully to consider Clark's findings. Too often, in discussions about leadership in the modern church, Paul and other NT figures are framed as purpose-driven individuals who look more like American business executives than first-century personalities. We will be equipped to properly contextualize Paul's views about leadership in our churches today only when we understand Paul's convictions in their own first-century cultural context. Andrew Clarke has assisted us greatly in this regard.

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The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary. By Arland J. Hultgren. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xxix + 522 pp., \$35.00.

Hultgren's volume consists of an introduction to the parables; an interpretation of 38 individual parables; a chapter on the evangelists as interpreters of Jesus' parables; a chapter on the parables in the *Gospel of Thomas*; appendixes on the purpose of the parables according to the evangelists, the parables of Luke 15, and whether *doulos* means "servant" or "slave"; and an extensive general bibliography. The introduction treats identification and classification of the parables; distinctive elements in the parables; the universal and particular in the parables; and how the parables should be interpreted. The parables themselves are divided into seven categories: revelation of God, exemplary behavior, wisdom, godly life, final judgment, allegory, and the kingdom of God. The interpretation of each parable consists of the author's translation; notes on textual and translation problems; an exegetical commentary; an exposition; and a bibliography. If a parable appears in more than one Gospel, there is also a section that compares the two or three accounts, and then each is treated separately. If the parable also appears in the *Gospel of Thomas*, its account is compared to the canonical account(s), but is not subjected to thorough exegesis. The chapter on the *Gospel of Thomas*, however, does provide an exegesis of the four parables unique to it.

The strength of the book is its thorough exegesis of a large number of parables. (Scholars differ on the number. Stein, *Introduction to the Parables*, 22–26, identifies 49 that are probable and 26 that are possible. The problem involves how many similes and metaphors to include. Hultgren includes few of these.) The exegesis deals with most of the problems raised by modern criticism and does so from a surprisingly conservative point of view. For example, no parable is altogether denied to Jesus and attributed entirely to the early church, although the author recognizes that the evangelists have

adapted the parables in various ways. Furthermore, he never claims that the *Gospel of Thomas* has a more primitive and authoritative form of a parable. Still further, he refuses to deny that Jesus could have ever used allegory. (In addition to three thoroughly allegorical parables, Hultgren finds allegorical elements in others, most of which go back to Jesus himself.) Hultgren, however, is reluctant to attribute to Jesus himself the purpose of parables as stated in Mark 4:11–12, because it presupposes a period of reflection on “why so many refused the Christian message” (p. 460). It is not, however, the invention of Mark, but emerged in the early, Aramaic-speaking, Palestinian church. Nevertheless, there is an evangelical element throughout the book that recognizes the authority and relevance of Jesus and his teaching. The exposition has practical value for Bible study, teaching, and preaching. This is a book which has value for the Church as well as the academy.

The introduction is somewhat brief (19 pages) and inadequate. Stein is much better on this subject (even though he interprets only 14 parables). Although Hultgren deals with textual problems, he is not skilled in textual criticism and relies heavily on secondary sources.

Everything considered, this is an excellent book. If I could own but one volume on the subject, this would be it.

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In the Company of Jesus: Characters in Mark's Gospel. By Elizabeth Struthers Malbon. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000, xx + 244 pp., \$29.95 paper.

The study of characterization in Mark's Gospel is an area of research in which Elizabeth Struthers Malbon has shown considerable leadership and insight. This book, *In the Company of Jesus*, is a collection of previously published essays on the topic of Markan characterization, focusing not on the main character of Mark's Gospel, Jesus, but on the other characters around Jesus, on followers and foes, exemplars and enemies. Yet Jesus remains central in these studies because all other groups and individuals in the narrative are evaluated in terms of their response to Jesus and his demands. Malbon examines how characters are portrayed in relation to Jesus and also in relation to one another, noting the interplay, comparisons, and contrasts between these characters and the way in which their portrayal reaches out to readers.

Two themes pervade the book, both of which are important for understanding characterization in Mark's Gospel. First, Mark's portrait of the followers of Jesus is both composite and complex. According to Malbon, Mark's treatment of discipleship is composite in that he does not limit the followers of Jesus to the disciples. Other Markan characters meet the demands of following Jesus, so that Jesus' followers include also the crowd at times, certain women who exemplify both faith and sacrificial service, as well as other exceptional individuals such as Bartimaeus and Jairus. Therefore, a study of discipleship in Mark's Gospel cannot focus entirely on the characterization of the disciples without missing some of what Mark has to say about following Jesus. Malbon also argues that Mark's portrayal of discipleship is complex, since he shows both the strong and weak points of Jesus' followers. What Mark has to say about discipleship is understood not only from the failure of the disciples and other followers, but also from their success and from the tension between success and failure. By providing a composite and complex image of Jesus' “fallible followers,” Mark is able to communicate that discipleship is both open-ended and demanding. No one is excluded from following Jesus, but no one finds it easy.

A second theme is that an adequate understanding of Mark's use of characterization must take note of exceptional individuals. For example, Malbon points out that members of the Jewish religious establishment are generally characterized as enemies of Jesus but that they are not automatically categorized in this way. Mark's Gospel includes an exceptional synagogue ruler, Jairus, an exceptional member of the council, Joseph of Arimathea, and an exceptional scribe, one who is not far from the kingdom of God. The Gospel of Mark stereotypes the Jewish religious leaders as Jesus' opponents but refuses to make that picture absolute. The exceptional characters in Mark suggest that being a foe of Jesus is not simply a matter of one's social or religious status and role but rather a matter of how one responds to Jesus, and the same is true of being a follower of Jesus. Judas, after all, is an exceptional disciple. Mark's Gospel challenges the absolutism of simply "good" and "bad" characters. The Jewish leaders are antagonistic to Jesus, but not without exception, while the followers of Jesus waver between faith and doubt, trust and fear, obedience and denial. No one can be ruled out as a potential disciple, and yet no one is a perfect disciple either.

One of the ways that Malbon makes a contribution is by consistently asking, "How does the text work?" In other words, how do the various literary patterns of the text, and the interrelated characters, settings, and actions of the plot, work together to communicate meaning? In general, interpreters are more accustomed to asking, "What does the text mean?" However, Malbon's study of characterization in Mark demonstrates the value of examining how Mark's narrative works, since the way in which a text communicates constrains what a text can and cannot mean. It is to be hoped that the publication of these essays will make Malbon's work available to a wider audience, so that it might continue to influence future studies of characterization and discipleship in Mark's Gospel.

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From a Broken Covenant to Circumcision of the Heart: Pauline Intertextual Exegesis in Romans 2:17-29. By Timothy W. Berkley. SBLDS 175. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000, x + 260 pp., \$45.00.

The point of departure for this 1998 Marquette dissertation is Richard Hays's *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*. But whereas Hays is content to find "echoes" wherever "language and vocabulary from OT texts resonate with the reader" (p. 50), Berkley is interested in the more substantial category of reference, places where Paul engages in intertextual exegesis or "intentional interpretation done to explain the meaning of scripture for application to a contemporary situation or make sense of human experience" (p. 11).

The work unfolds in four working chapters, followed by a summary and conclusion. In the first chapter, Berkley discusses his methodology for uncovering intertextual references. In the second, he applies this methodology to identify several OT texts (Genesis 17; Deuteronomy 29-30; Jer 7:2-11; 9:23-26; Ezek 26:16-27) that form the background for Rom 2:17-29. The third chapter works through Rom 2:17-29 sequentially "to determine how, where, and by what process those OT texts have informed his conclusions" (p. 65), and the fourth seeks to bolster this analysis by placing it within the context of the entire book of Romans.

The argument is mostly convincing. Deuteronomy plays a significant role throughout the book of Romans, and while it is not cited expressly in 2:17-29, its themes and terminology are evident. The prophetic texts are themselves built upon a deuteronomic

foundation and form a natural linkage. Particularly helpful is the suggestion that Paul's proclamation of Jewish guilt in this passage is not based on contemporary examples of Jewish law-breaking, but on prophetic pronouncements, which establish that the covenant has been broken.

Less convincing is the suggestion that Ezek 36:26 functions as a bridge text that enables Paul to equate the "circumcision in the flesh" of Genesis 17 with "circumcision of the heart" in Deuteronomy 30 based on the phrase "hearts of flesh." This is supposedly an application of Hillel's thirteenth rule, whereby two conflicting texts can be reconciled by reference to a third. Such an exegetical move is not evident in the text of Romans and remains a speculation about Paul's interpretive activity behind the scenes. Even a reference to Genesis 17 remains less than obvious in Rom 2:17–29, a point that Berkley concedes.

Overall, however, this remains a valuable study, which not only helps to explain Paul's argument in Rom 2:17–29, but also provides a paradigm for investigating a wealth of intertextual references throughout Paul's writings.

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The Letter to the Ephesians. By Peter T. O'Brien. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999, xxxiii + 536 pp., \$40.00.

Peter O'Brien has long been a highly respected and trusted name in evangelical biblical scholarship. With the publication of this commentary on Ephesians, O'Brien has now completed major commentaries on all four of the so-called "prison epistles." In 1982 he published a commentary on Colossians and Philemon for the WBC series and then in 1991 he wrote a massive exegetical treatment of Philippians for the NIGTC series. If insightfulness, substance, and clarity are the marks of a superb commentary, then this volume is truly superb. In my opinion, this installment is his best yet.

Standing against the current of contemporary critical scholarship, O'Brien argues that it was the apostle Paul himself who wrote this letter. In fact, he questions a fundamental assumption made by many scholars who argue for pseudonymity, namely, that pseudonymity was a recognized and accepted practice in the early Church. Drawing on the recent Oxford dissertation by J. Duff, O'Brien asserts that there was no positive evidence at all that pseudonymity was seen as a literary technique accepted by Christians in the first and second centuries. O'Brien also questions the assumption that a document could be both pseudonymous and canonical. He argues that it was, in reality, the other way around: Ephesians was recognized as apostolic and authoritative and, on that basis, was accepted into the canon.

Although he does not see *en Ephesō* as the original reading of 1:1, he still sees the letter written for churches in and around Ephesus and perhaps also for those on the road to Colossae (where Tychicus would have been traveling with the letter to the Colossians). Paul wrote the letter during his Roman imprisonment sometime in the years AD 61–62. It would have been helpful, however, to get a more thorough explanation of how the grammar of Eph 1:1 could support his view on omission.

O'Brien contends that the main purpose of Ephesians could best be characterized by the expression "identity formation." For O'Brien this is more than simply helping people understand their new nature in Christ. It is broader and "cosmic" in orientation—encompassing earth and heaven and orienting believers into their place in God's plan from creation until the end. O'Brien sees the end-time "summing up of everything

in Christ" (Eph 1:10) as determinative of the essence of Paul's thought in Ephesians. This involves the two interrelated themes of (1) unity in Christ (especially the uniting of Jew and Gentile into one body in Christ) and (2) cosmic reconciliation. He makes a compelling case for this as the heart of Ephesians, drawing on the important studies of C. C. Caragounis and T. Moritz. The central message of Ephesians, then, not only involves the Church, but also the theme of how God deals with the rebellion of the demonic powers—and how the Church and the powers relate in terms of conflict and struggle. O'Brien does an exceptional job of developing these themes throughout the course of his exposition.

In developing the theme of the "powers," O'Brien rightly rejects the view that identifies these personal demonic intelligences with structures of thought or political institutions. He claims that such a view "fails to do justice to the historical context of the New Testament in which belief in the spiritual realm was widespread" (p. 469).

Nowhere looming in the background of Ephesians does O'Brien find Gnosticism. Consequently, he does not root *plērōma* in a Gnostic cosmology, but in the OT idea of God's presence and glory filling the temple. In Ephesians, this "fullness" refers to all of God's attributes and activities—his Spirit, word, wisdom, and glory. Throughout the commentary, O'Brien does an excellent job of providing a concise rundown of the relevant OT and Jewish background to terms, concepts, and literary forms. He rightly sees the OT and Judaism as the principal matrix for interpreting Paul's thought.

On the other hand, O'Brien is also sensitive to matters of contextualization. He regularly helps the reader to understand the impact and relevance of Paul's message for Gentile Christians living on the west coast of Asia Minor.

Although this commentary is meant for a broad readership (many of whom may not know Greek), O'Brien makes ample use of footnotes to explain Greek constructions and to support his interpretation of a particular Greek phrase. O'Brien frequently refers to the more recent studies of Greek grammar by S. E. Porter and K. L. McKay in addition to the traditional grammars (although he appears to be unfamiliar with the important study of the Greek verb by B. Fanning).

This is a clearly written commentary that provides an excellent analysis and interpretation of Paul's letter to the Ephesians. It is the best all-around commentary on Ephesians currently available. Because of the importance of Ephesians for Christian "identity formation," the letter to the Ephesians and this commentary should be consulted regularly by Christian leaders involved in "spiritual formation."

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The Letter to Philemon: A New Translation with Notes and Commentary. By Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke. Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xviii + 561 pp., \$40.00.

Eerdmans has added a new acronym to everyone's list of abbreviations with the publication of the first volumes of ECC—the Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Written by Markus Barth and Helmut Blanke, Philemon is the second volume in this series. Barth is well known for having authored in the Anchor Bible series the two-volume commentary on Ephesians and with Blanke the commentary on Colossians.

This impressive new commentary had an interesting publication journey. In the translator's preface in the Colossians commentary, Astrid B. Beck notes that Barth was failing in health while writing the Colossians and Philemon commentaries. Her last

correspondence with Barth was in 1992 concerning Philemon. After Barth's death in 1994, the editors in the Anchor Bible series dropped Barth's unfinished Philemon commentary and contracted with Joseph A. Fitzmyer to write the volume. Beck became the associate editor of the Eerdmans Critical Commentary and, upon completion of the final 75 pages by Blanke, persuaded Eerdmans to include the finished commentary in the new series. It is remarkable that both the inaugural volume on First and Second Timothy (reviewed above) and the second volume on Philemon were originally contracted to be in the Anchor Bible series, were authored by scholars who had died while writing the commentaries, and were completed by their former students!

While the majority of French and German commentators on Philemon have treated this letter in single volumes, the majority of English commentators have included Philemon with a commentary on Colossians or with one on all the Captivity Epistles. Consequently, Philemon has taken a back seat to its canonical big brothers. Having looked at almost every English commentary on Philemon published in the last century, I can find only four in which Philemon is treated in a single volume. Barth and Blanke have remedied this disservice to Philemon in a magisterial way.

This commentary is divided into three parts. Part 1, "The Social Background: Slavery at Paul's Time," is a 102-page survey of the conditions of slavery and of manumission at Paul's time. Barth and Blanke acknowledge that this sketch is not based on newly discovered or unused sources. It goes into more detail than some of the skimpy treatments of this subject in other commentaries. In fact, it treats this subject better and more objectively than do most Bible dictionaries and encyclopedias. The authors rightly point out that "ideological presuppositions can influence the selection and interpretation of ancient texts" (p. 3), and they warn that the humanitarian, the abolitionist, and the Marxist need to control their emotional aversion against slavery and to weigh duly every fact about slavery in the ancient world. The preacher will find much material to illustrate various points about slavery in the OT as well as the NT; the student will acquire that broad understanding of slavery so necessary to place the Bible in its context; and the scholar will work through the primary literary, philosophical, and biblical sources with profit.

Part 2, "Literary, Biographical, and Contextual Issues," is a 132-page analysis of introductory matters such as formal literary questions, our knowledge of Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus, a comparison with similar or possible contradicting NT passages, and a history of Philemon interpretation from the patristic period to modern liberation theologians. Barth and Blanke make a special contribution in this part with their review of what we do and do not know about Paul, Philemon, and Onesimus. They are just as critical of John Knox's theory that Onesimus was the slave of Archippus and that the letter from the Laodiceans mentioned in Col 4:16 was the letter to Philemon as they are of J. B. Lightfoot's "almost ridiculous catalogue of Onesimus's faults" (p. 144, n. 82). "Frequently in the history of interpretation," the authors comment, "the knowledge gaps regarding the specific circumstances presupposed and discussed in [Philemon] have been filled with more or less wild guesses and theories" (p. 133). Readers of this *Journal* will especially be interested in Barth and Blanke's comparison of the *Haustafeln* of Ephesians, Colossians, and 1 Timothy with the substance of Philemon. Although the authors reject the Pauline authorship of 1 Timothy, this rejection does not in my opinion hinder their analysis.

The final part, consisting of 255 pages, is a verse-by-verse commentary on the 25 verses of Philemon. C. H. Dodd once said that the best interpreter is the translator. In this section Barth and Blanke offer their new translation of Philemon and then proceed to show how through careful exegesis they arrived at this translation. Every Greek word is put under the philological and contextual microscope. The authors struggle

with possible English translations that will be faithful to their exegetical results. Comparisons with other translations are made. A good example of their approach is their translation of *agapētos* in Phm 1:1. "Paul first calls Philemon *agapētos*. Because the literal translation 'loved' sounds ugly in English and 'beloved' reminds of recently deceased relatives, the adjective 'dear' could not be avoided, although it is often used in a superficial and trite sense" (p. 250). I wish second-year Greek students would read this part of the commentary. It would be a helpful guide in showing how exegesis and translation go hand-in-hand.

Although published in 2000, the bibliography is complete only up to 1994. Philemon research has advanced during those seven years, so be aware that the commentary is a bit behind in the bibliography. I applaud the editors at Eerdmans for not letting the work of Markus Barth go unpublished and Helmut Blanke for unselfishly completing the work of his professor.

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The Letters of John. By Colin G. Kruse. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, xxii + 255 pp., \$28.00.

Other commentaries in this series that have appeared so far are Leon Morris's on Matthew and Romans, D. A. Carson's on John, Peter O'Brien's on Ephesians, and Doug Moo's on James. Kruse's on the Johannine epistles is a worthy addition to this impressive line-up.

Kruse opens with about 50 pages of introductory discussion. He concludes that "the fairest way to read the evidence" is that John the son of Zebedee is the author of 1 John (p. 14). Further, the same person wrote 2 and 3 John (pp. 37, 42). On other introductory matters, too, Kruse adopts fairly noncontroversial positions. This is not because he is unaware of modern hypotheses to the contrary, with which he interacts in footnotes. He is simply not always persuaded by them.

In the course of introductory discussion there are helpful compilations of patristic references to John (pp. 11–14) and to "the secessionists" against whom John may have been reacting (pp. 20–26). An appendix collects references to Cain in biblical and extrabiblical literature (missing here, however, are references found in Josephus and Philo).

Kruse's strengths include clarity and economy. He does a good job of boiling down much technical discussion. An example is "A Note on Sinless Perfectionism," one of about 22 concise excurses that pepper the commentary. After laying out the relevant passages from 1 John, Kruse summarizes the views of de la Potterie, Inman, Kubo, Kotzé, Brown, Swadling, and Strecker—all in just four pages. His own solution to the tension between 1 John 2:1 and 3:6–9 is to say that there may be no solution at hand. But then he slips in what he thinks the best possibility is: "if we recognize the connection between sin and *anomia* (rebellion) in 3:1–10, we might say that the sin which distinguishes the children of the devil is the sin of the devil, rebellion or *anomia*, and it is this sin that is impossible for believers to commit" (p. 132). However one assesses his proposal, his *claritas* in reaching and articulating it is admirable.

Much is gained by Kruse's directness and simplicity, but there is a price tag. Theological reflection, to say nothing of application, is rare. This is not all bad, because if a commentary will help the reader wrestle with a given text and its possible links with other biblical passages (one of the commentary's *fortes*), theological reflection and

application may readily suggest themselves. But one seldom finds the theological richness of, say, Calvin, or even I. H. Marshall, much less the attempts to make application found in Burge or the homiletical suggestiveness of Stott.

Yet within the parameters Kruse sets, his comments are solid and insightful. If there is any real weakness, it might be the slender connection between OT passages and theology and Kruse's exposition. He is skillful, at times even painstaking, in showing how John's epistles interconnect with each other, with the fourth Gospel, and with other NT writings. But one frequently suspects that John's doctrine and ethics may have had more rootage (via Jesus?) in OT passages that Kruse indicates. More attention to LXX parallels to some of John's locutions might have been fruitful. But then that might have tilted things in a more technical direction than Kruse wished to go.

This points to the fact that while cognizant of recent scholarship, the commentary makes no attempt to match strides with the likes of Brown, Schnackenburg, or Strecker. Readers seeking a full-scale critical treatment must look elsewhere. But for teaching or preaching the Scriptures with an eye to recent scholarly trends Kruse ought to find wide use. I have assigned it myself as the textbook for a seminary English Bible class on John's letters.

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Is there a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge. By Kevin Vanhoozer. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 496 pp., \$29.99.

The Bible is the Word of God. In and through its richness and complexity, a single divine utterance makes itself heard. As it narrates and interprets the story of Israel and of Jesus, it speaks about God—but in such a way that its human speech about God becomes the medium of a divine speech, *God* speaking about God and about ourselves in relation to God. Speech requires not only a speaker but also a hearer or addressee, and, as Word of God, the Bible's address is broad enough to encompass not just ancient Israel and the early church but also ourselves. To describe the Bible as "Word of God" is to identify God as a speaking God, but it is also to identify ourselves as hearers and addressees of this divine speaking. Yet it is not obvious to everybody that "Word of God" is an appropriate or adequate description of the Bible. It is widely assumed that the equation of Bible and Word of God is just another piece of outdated evangelical Protestant dogma, fundamentally at odds with the historical realities of texts that do not characterize *themselves* as instances of a divine speech with universal scope. If the texts are allowed to be themselves (so it is argued), we will read them primarily as utterances addressed by human authors to their own contemporaries. The dogmatic equation will have to be put into abeyance. The proper response to this objection is not to invoke a doctrine of inspiration (which would come later), but to point to the centrality of Jesus Christ, the incarnate divine Word attested as such by the writings of both the Old and the New Testaments. It is because Jesus is God's Word that the Bible, too, is, derivatively, God's Word.

"Modernist" or "liberal" challenges to Word-of-God talk have been around for quite some time, and the debates they engendered have long since settled into their familiar and often unsatisfactory routines. What is now becoming clear, however, is that the typical "modernist" critique of Word-of-God talk is being supplemented and supplanted by a "postmodern" critique not just of "the Word of God" but of "the Word" as such. It is this postmodern critique of the Word to which Kevin Vanhoozer responds in this major work of theological hermeneutics. According to Vanhoozer, the concept of "the

Word of God" is bound up with the general assumption that "the Word" (or Speech) is a reliable conduit of communication between one person and another. If, in and through the Bible, God speaks, then speech must in principle be trustworthy and meaning must be determinate—assuming that God does not intend to tease us with riddles and paradoxes. Postmodernity, however, is the denial of the trustworthiness of speech and the determinacy of meaning. Its response to the Word in textual form is to *refuse* any determinate communication that it may appear to offer. Instead, it asks whose interests the text seeks to further, and at whose expense. Alternatively, it may promote the idea that meaning is the creation of communities of readers and is not an inherent, stable property of texts. The text as a communicative action disappears, along with its author: it is undermined by the postulate of an ideological sub-text, it is handed over to its readers to use as they see fit. In the case of the Bible, postmodernity can tolerate the idea that the church might constitute one such community of readers—but only so long as the rights of non-ecclesial reading communities are accorded equal validity. Within this framework, to assert that the Bible *should* be read as the Word of God is to commit a moral as well as an intellectual error.

It would be possible to turn one's back on all this, and to develop a theological hermeneutic purely from the internal resources of Christian faith. Vanhoozer takes a different route, however, seeking to refute postmodern literary theory not by theology alone but by *better* literary theory—"better" both because it is inherently more plausible and because it coheres with Christian truth-claims. Although the Bible and biblical interpretation are of central importance for Vanhoozer, the question "Is there a meaning in this text?" refers not only to the Bible but to any text. It is argued that, since meaningful communication does indeed occur in texts, it can also occur in the Bible; but it is also argued that, since meaningful communication occurs in the Bible, it also occurs in other texts. Like Barth, Vanhoozer believes that biblical interpretation has paradigmatic significance for other forms of interpretation—at one point even arguing that the role of the Holy Spirit in biblical interpretation extends into the reading of non-biblical texts. If the Bible has a determinate meaning, and if the interpreter's main task is to articulate that meaning, then that is also the case with (for example) Shakespeare. Christians read and should read books other than the Bible, and they must learn to read them precisely as Christians.

What would it mean to read as a Christian? Vanhoozer agrees with postmodernity in seeing reading as an ethical as well as an intellectual activity, but he locates the ethical dimension in a quite different place. For postmodernism, the text must be dragged before a tribunal and subjected to interrogation about its own ideological tendencies, its tacit support for an unjust status quo, its stereotyping of marginalized groups, and so on. Vanhoozer regards this inquisitorial practice as fundamentally unethical, for all its claim to occupy the moral high ground. It is unethical because in dealing with texts we are dealing with *persons* whose communicative actions the texts embody. It makes no difference that many of these persons are long dead; Vanhoozer rejects the claim that "the dead have no rights" and that the texts of dead authors may therefore be manipulated at will by their readers. Since writing is that technology which *preserves* communicative actions, the text is the occasion for genuine interpersonal communication. The enduring presence of the author within a text guarantees its stability as a meaningful communicative action with a specific illocutionary force, and intending specific perlocutionary effects. The text does not drift through history, as in Derrida's reading of Plato—an orphan bereft of the sheltering paternal presence of its dead author, open to every kind of arbitrary mistreatment at the hands of its readers. In construing the text in this way, postmodernity has simply eliminated the text's *otherness*, which is also the otherness of the author. Its supposed concern for the Other is hypocritical, for what it really wants is to be left alone with itself, so as to read *itself* into and out of the texts

it takes up. Here as elsewhere, the elimination of the Other is an act of violence and injustice, a flagrant breach of the injunction to love—and thus to attend to—our neighbor as ourselves. For ethical as well as theological reasons, our initial stance as interpreters must be to expose ourselves to the illocutionary and perlocutionary force of the text.

This is a compelling if demanding book. Vanhoozer is thoroughly familiar with contemporary hermeneutics and literary theory, and presents the views of friends and foes alike with charity and justice. In scope and content, it is comparable to Anthony Thiselton's *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*. In both cases, the destabilizing tendencies of contemporary literary theory are countered with the help of resources drawn from the speech-act theory of Austin, Searle, and Habermas; and in both cases, the reviewer is tempted to reach for the possibly over-used adjective "magisterial." Thiselton tends to present the views he surveys on their own terms, whereas Vanhoozer is more concerned to develop a constructive argument of his own. In that sense, his is the more creative of the two works. Its theological dimension is also more fully and satisfactorily developed than is Thiselton's: in particular, his exploration of the analogy between the act of communication and the doctrine of the Trinity has the potential to open up a much-needed dialogue between theological hermeneutics and trinitarian theology. (At one point, however, I do find Thiselton more congenial, and that is in his high estimation of the hermeneutics of Schleiermacher—whom Vanhoozer virtually ignores.)

"Magisterial" or not, Vanhoozer's book naturally has its limitations. I conclude by mentioning a couple of these.

First, theological hermeneutics should arguably be rooted in the *practice* of biblical interpretation, and—in the case of a general hermeneutics such as this—in the practice of textual interpretation in general. To my mind, Vanhoozer is not quite attentive enough to the realities of exegetical *practice*. For example, his plea on behalf of the author sometimes makes him sound like a defender of the so-called "historical-critical method" which, in spite of postmodernism, continues to dominate contemporary biblical studies. Much if not all of what takes place under this rubric is indeed worthy of defense. But Vanhoozer probably believes that a historical-critical reading of Scripture is not identical to a theological one. If so, he needs to explain more clearly how his own author-centered hermeneutic relates to a "historical-critical" one, and what the difference would be in exegetical practice.

Second, there is an obvious danger in the claim that biblical interpretation should be paradigmatic for other forms of textual interpretation. A text that is read as "the Word of God" and a text read as a literary classic will probably *not* be read in just the same way. Vanhoozer knows that, of course, but the tendency of his argument is to emphasize the common ground and to play down the difference; to emphasize the ethical dimension of the act of reading in general and to underplay the distinctive theological dimension of the act of biblical interpretation. (Is it so clear that Christian theology necessarily has a stake in how people read Shakespeare?)

Yet this is a significant and impressive contribution to the contemporary hermeneutical debate, which combines an evangelical reverence for the Scriptural word with an open and confident engagement with the wider culture in which theology too exists. It is written in an engaging style and with a light touch, and there are many memorable and challenging insights. I enjoyed a footnote on page 361 in which the question, "Did God say . . . ?" identifies Satan as the first radical reader-response critic, "the first to replace the author's voice with his own." But there is a serious point here, and again it has to do with otherness. "Theological non-realism is ultimately a rebellious protest against having to answer to any other voice than our own."

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A Concise Dictionary of Theology. By Gerald O'Collins, S.J., and Edward G. Farrugia, S.J. New York: Paulist, 2000, xi + 304 pp., \$19.95 paper.

A concise dictionary should define terms briefly, clearly, and accurately while canvassing the contours of the theological map. It must be written with lean, muscular prose. To be overly comprehensive encumbers the dictionary with extraneous detail. In their revised and expanded, but still slim, edition, Gerald O'Collins and Edward G. Farrugia have achieved the goal of conciseness and clarity. With entries from "Abba" to "Zwinglianism" that include biblical, catechetical, ethical, historical, liturgical, and philosophical terms, the authors—not editors—have combined an adequate range of coverage with a focused intensity on each entry.

The two Jesuit authors are well known and respected among their fellow Catholic scholars. The self-proclaimed aim of their book is to remedy the problem of confusion over theological terms, especially for beginning students. The advent of the "global village" has led to people with diverse views and different use of terms to come into contact with one another. This causes misunderstandings to arise over miscommunication. Most often the misunderstandings come about as the neophyte (or uninformed scholar) reads a text from another tradition without comprehending the meaning of the key terms. Thus, the authors hope that this book will help readers (especially Western, Roman Catholic students) grow in the comprehension and accurate use of theological terms.

The book has many useful features. Where appropriate each entry includes references to the benchmark work of Neuner and Dupuis, *The Christian Faith*, to Denzinger and Hünerman's *Enchiridion Symbolorum*, and to key documents of the Second Vatican Council, the 1983 Code of Canon Law, and the Bible. Consequently, those hungry for more depth are not left starving but are guided to the appropriate sources to learn more. Each term includes references to other related terms, and an index of names is included as well. However, those interested in a scholarly bibliography for each entry will be disappointed, as none is given.

The authors note that their "aim is not to smuggle in some system but simply to identify key words and phrases that are used in contemporary theology, sometimes in a variety of ways" (p. viii). Frankly this reader does not fully accept his nod towards objectivity. For example, a polemic against predestination runs throughout the book: "The Pelagian controversy provoked from St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430) come extreme assertions about God electing" (p. 210). Also, the authors misunderstood *sola scriptura* as "the only authoritative rule of faith" when it is more carefully defined as the chief rule of faith (p. 146), and they make the blanket assertion that "Protestants have often overemphasized original sin and its evil effects" (p. 184). Such remarks imply an inherent system. Still, on the whole, the book is suffused with an ecumenical spirit. In fact, the authors make many congenial statements such as "Pope John Paul II joined the German bishops in recognizing that the *Augsburg Confession* confesses fundamental truths of our common Christian faith" (p. 22).

Another criticism is that at times the authors are uncritical in their appropriation of tradition (some of which may be true, such as St. Thomas the Apostle founding a church in India) while at other times they employ common historical criticism. Also, the book's strength of brevity has its disadvantages. No individual entries of persons are included; instead, important persons are mentioned only under the terms that relate to them. Those looking for more depth may want to consult the recent *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* (New York: Crossroad, 1995) edited by René Latourelle and Rino Fisichella or the more dated but still helpful *Theological Dictionary*, written by Karl Rahner and Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1965).

The strengths of the book are its conciseness but more particularly its inclusion of terms that most dictionaries of theology do not include. Do you know how to define

Acoemetæ, Bogomils, Malabar Christians, Ruthenian, and Zeon? These terms are taken from texts, events, or issues derived from Eastern Christianity. The dictionary shines here by providing access to terms that can no longer be neglected. The fall of the communist empire, the resultant growing awareness of and dialogue between evangelicals and the Eastern Orthodox, and the actual growth of Eastern Orthodoxy in the United States make the dictionary relevant. For evangelicals who do not know much about Roman Catholic liturgical and theological terms such as *forum internum* and *motu proprio* the book is also apropos. Because of these entries on Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy, both the learning student and the learned scholar will benefit.

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The Fundamentals for the Twenty-First Century: Examining the Crucial Issues of the Christian Faith. By Mal Couch (ed.). Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000, 656 pp., \$29.99.

This collection of writings on theological themes is meant to do for the twenty-first century what *The Fundamentals*, edited by R. A. Torrey and A. C. Dixon, accomplished near the opening of the twentieth century. Subjects range from revelation, inspiration, hermeneutics, the fall, the Trinity, and the person and work of Christ to paganism, pluralism, missions, abortion, and eschatological areas.

Eminently readable single column paragraphs cover large white pages. Bold type sets off section headings, though textbook type numbering is only occasionally seen. Endnotes and three extensive helpful indices follow. Authors' pictures grace their chapters, and an introductory page lists contributors' positions and degrees without telling where the degrees were earned. Contrary to the publicist's claim of "34 of today's most recognizable Bible scholars and teachers," some are noticeably unrecognizable. Also strange is the "Abbreviations" page that features only four entries: BAGD, LXX, TDNT, and TWOT.

The collection begins in the theological categories of introduction and bibliography, mixed with theology proper. Attention is given to how one can know truth, then the concept that the written Word of God presents such truth, followed by the importance of hermeneutics. Unhappily, not much substantive hermeneutics can be discussed in twelve pages of summary.

After a challenging chapter on revelation, inspiration and inerrancy by Paige Patterson and Harold Foos, biblical creationism is defended by Jobe Martin, then Henry Morris covers man's fall and the consequent curse on creation. Robert Lightner next examines the doctrine of angels and demons, covering the topic well by using the biblical references, the only authoritative sources on the subject.

Two chapters—one by Arnold Fruchtenbaum, the other by Thomas McCall—are dedicated to the topic of Israel. It is argued that literal Israel has a large place in God's covenant plans and that much of the OT promises made to Israel will be fulfilled for Jewish people who will yet come to faith in Christ. Premillennial eschatology is clearly espoused, but one wonders: Should this be a rallying point for twenty-first century orthodoxy? Interestingly, Fruchtenbaum argues that dispensationalism is inconsistent when it denies the continuity of circumcision for Jewish believers today. He holds that a distinction should be made between circumcision under the Abrahamic covenant and circumcision under the Mosaic Law. This chapter, however, is most disappointing. For example, no fewer than five lists are constructed—one fourteen points long—and they appear without much elaboration.

By contrast, some of the chapters are excellent. The better ones include Edward Hindson's historical introduction and his virgin birth chapter, Gary Habermas on the resurrection, Robert Lightner on the angelic realm, Thomas Edgar on spiritual truth, and Robert Gromacki on the personality and deity of the Holy Spirit. Chapters by Erwin Lutzer, Renald Showers, Wayne House, and John Walvoord are interesting but reprinted from previous works.

Tim and Beverly LaHaye each contribute chapters. Beverly's "The Christian Family in the Twenty-First Century" argues persuasively and biblically for complementary roles for men and women as God's design and presents practical descriptions of those roles as well as the role of the child. Tim exposes the spiritual and cultural warfare that engulfs today's world. Also dealing with divergent worldviews are Albert Platt, Gary Stewart, Thomas Ice, and David Noebel.

Several chapters are devoted to social issues—abortion (Showers), church and state in America (House), church and state in general (Paul Fink), and civil disobedience (Kerby Anderson). House's reprinted article traces American jurisprudence regarding *The Constitution's* "establishment of religion" clause, concluding that the present court narrowly favors cooperation between church and state rather than hostility, but noting that the future court makeup could alter that to favor a religion of secularism.

Most of the volume breaks no new ground but reiterates old truths. Some articles signal dangers in the church and secular trends that make these doctrines necessary for the twenty-first century. Though an attempt is made to pattern the volume after *The Fundamentals*, the influence of this latest work will not rival the former. The earlier writings were widely and freely (pun intended) circulated among thousands of missionaries and clergy and have been reprinted numerous times during the last century. Earlier writers included Benjamin Warfield, Campbell Morgan, James Orr, Reuben Torrey, Handley Moule, James Gray, Thomas Whitelaw, J. C. Ryle, and other extraordinary men from several continents. The present work, although containing some excellent scholars, does not rise to a level of greatness. Many of today's individual theologies are more complete and challenging than this work. The place for this product will be the homes of godly men and women who desire an easily understood theology that renews their thinking on the issues and challenges them to hold onto important beliefs.

Despite these reservations, I appreciated the generally thoughtful and well-written articles. Those who favor the pretribulation rapture, premillennial eschatology with the restoration of Israel, and a dispensationalism that distinguishes between the church and Israel, will find help. Recent creation, Noah's world-wide flood, evangelism and missions are espoused, while Lordship salvation, Hugh Ross's progressive creationism, and exercising gifts of healing and exorcism are opposed. Church ordinances and ecclesiology are ignored, but the work is eminently conservative. The most cited sources are Ryrie, Walvoord, Henry, Chafer, and Lightner.

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Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective. By William W. Menzies and Stanley M. Horton. Springfield: Logion, 1993, 304 pp., \$20.95. *Systematic Theology*, rev. ed. Edited by Stanley M. Horton. Springfield: Logion Press, 1995, 703 pp., \$34.99.

These two recently-reprinted volumes articulate the closest thing possible to official Assemblies of God (A/G) doctrine at the present time and as such are legitimate

supplements to the more inclusive and “generic” charismatic perspective of J. Rodman Williams’s multi-volume *Renewal Theology* (1988–1992). The A/G is the largest and most significant denominational beneficiary of the Pentecostal impulse in global Christianity throughout the last nearly one hundred years. As part of their distinctive testimony, the Assemblies stress the filling of the Holy Spirit as initially evidenced (physically, at least) by speaking in tongues, and they view this experience as the key to empowerment for evangelization and missions. Like Baptists, they are congregational and independently inclined in their ecclesiology.

The A/G originally coalesced in 1916 around a *Statement of Fundamental Truths* (the adjective “fundamental” surely a reflection of controversies enveloping the religious scene back then). A large portion of this historic statement was devoted to affirming the doctrine of the Trinity, since the so-called Oneness issue (prompted by advocates of a modalistic view of God) also happened to be pressing at the time. Nevertheless, the *Statement* still managed to affirm such A/G distinctives as baptism in the Holy Spirit as an experience “distinct from and subsequent to the experience of the new birth,” that deliverance from sickness “is provided for in the atonement, and is the privilege of all believers,” and an expectation of the second coming of Christ as imminent and premillennial. Since 1916 there has been only some very minor tweaking of this *Statement*. As a way of responding to various contemporary theological and ethical issues, the A/G have instead adopted the intriguing practice of developing supplementary position papers. (These are available on the denomination’s website and include, for example, a thoroughly egalitarian position on women in ministry.)

The first volume, *Bible Doctrines: A Pentecostal Perspective*, is actually a revised and expanded edition of A/G theologian and historian William W. Menzies’s standard entitled *Understanding Our Doctrine* (1970). As such, it takes its place in an A/G tradition of organizing theological exposition according to the doctrinal headings of the *Statement of Fundamental Truths* and declaring its convictions in the form of commentary on the *Statement’s* contents.

The volume reads like a well-informed doctrinal primer or manifesto. Admittedly, it begins on a somewhat defensive note by declaring as its main *raison d’être* the protection of believers “from false teachers and false doctrine” (p. 7). But then it immediately affirms the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, and proceeds to declare and defend its various positions with a scrupulous Scripture-quoting and Scripture-citing biblicism. The functions of the church, it notes, are three: evangelism, worship and edification. Noticeably absent is any reference to the commonly-acknowledged fourth function of service and ministry to the world, an omission that may be a vestige of the sociologically-sectarian heritage the A/G shares with so many other children of fundamentalism. Along these lines one is impressed by how much of the very conservative evangelical theological tradition has been embraced by the Assemblies. Nowhere is this more evident than in the eschatology section, according to which end-time events will include a separate pre-tribulational rapture of all believers, a special future for ethnic Israel, a literal thousand-year millennium, and two separate judgments (one for believers, and another for unbelievers). Annihilationism is emphatically rejected.

As one might expect from a tradition that defines itself largely in terms of “long-neglected truths” about the Holy Spirit, *Bible Doctrines* gives proportionately more attention to pneumatology and “divine healing” than is typical of works of evangelical systematic theology. The “second blessing” character of baptism *in* the Spirit is defended by attempting to distinguish it from that baptism *by* the Spirit which is acknowledged to be, according to 1 Cor 12:13, part of the conversion-initiation of every Christian. Consciously distancing themselves from the Wesleyan and Holiness traditions of *subsequence* (the phrase “entire sanctification” was finally excised from the

Statement of Fundamental Truths in 1961 as misleading and unhelpful), Menzies and Horton write that "the baptism in the Holy Spirit is not primarily for the development of holiness in the individual (although this may be and should be enhanced by the baptism in the Spirit); it is empowering for service" (p. 123). Despite the parenthetical qualifier in the previous sentence, there is nothing in the book to suggest that actual sanctification is much other than a gradual process and progressive experience from conversion onwards.

Bible Doctrines encourages a holistic view of human personhood and an expectation of supernatural healing; specifically, it sees this latter provision grounded in the atonement and accessible through faith. In the face of death's inevitability and creation's "groaning," instances of healing should be viewed as "foretastes" of full redemption. Still, to the question of why all are not healed the authors plead mystery, but they are unable to resist adding (perhaps just a bit reproachfully, one senses) that where faith abounds, healings abound as well (p. 206).

The second volume under review, *Systematic Theology*, is a considerably longer collection of eighteen doctrinal essays written by two dozen well-qualified A/G professors and ministers. It begins with a particularly illuminating chapter by Gary B. McGee (co-editor of the *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*) on the historic development of A/G theology. Like *Bible Doctrines*, this volume contains study questions at the end of each chapter and concludes with the helpful scholarly apparatus of glossaries, indices, and bibliographies.

There are no striking differences in doctrine between these two works, but one recognizes a wider engagement with scholarly literature in this second volume and just a few more hints of self-examination and tentativeness in certain areas. At least one contributor prefers to think of Pentecostalism as a "third force" in church history, distinct from Catholicism and Protestantism, and reproaches Protestants for "subordinating the Spirit to the Bible" (p. 242). As a group, however, the contributors seem to affirm evangelical identity and to view themselves as empowered evangelicals rather than something entirely other. The inerrancy of Scripture is reaffirmed, and it is pointedly stressed that personal religious experience must always be subordinated to this higher objective standard.

While there is no equivocating over the conviction that the baptism in the Holy Spirit is separate from conversion and primarily for empowered service, contributing author Timothy P. Jenney concedes that "a renewed emphasis on the doctrine of sanctification is sorely needed in Pentecostal circles" and suggests as one reason for this that "the Pentecostal emphasis on Spirit baptism and supernatural gifts of the Spirit have resulted in an underemphasis on the rest of the work of the Spirit, including that of sanctification" (p. 404). Likewise, Vernon Purdy's article on healing takes a strong stand against the presumptions and excesses of the modern "faith movement" of Kenneth Copeland and others. Even so, Purdy reserves the patently-biased term "divine healing" for supernatural healings alone and in the end he, too, is more at pains to sustain high levels of expectation of healing than to provide consolations or perspective to those who remain unhealed. While contemporary A/G members are more concerned than ever before to assume their civic and societal responsibilities, they are emphatically not prepared to embrace the presumptions of "kingdom now" or "dominion" theology.

Stanley Horton did not invite any impatient younger revisionists to the editorial table this time. The extension of such a welcome in the future might well issue in a very interesting supplement to the two volumes we have in hand. As Gary McGee astutely points out, the *Statement of Fundamental Truths* was never meant as a creed but only as a basis for fellowship, and the relative authority of the many subsequent position

papers is even less clear. This set-up seems to allow for the possibility of some theological plasticity, and a general awareness of this is a source of both anxiety and hope within the Assemblies today.

While the primary purpose of these volumes appears to be the intellectual formation of A/G students in their own distinct doctrinal tradition, the two textbooks also provide a valuable window for outsiders into the mind and heart of a vibrant and very significant community of faith among us—the Assemblies of God.

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Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context. By Stanley J. Grenz and John R. Franke. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000, xi + 312 pp., \$24.95 paper.

In this book, Stan Grenz and John Franke offer a constructive account of theological method informed by nonfoundationalist philosophical assumptions and by a passion for providing the needed resources for the church to be faithful in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in this postmodern context. Their book is divided into three parts: (1) theology in the postmodern situation; (2) theology's sources; and (3) theology's focal motifs.

In part one there are two basic goals: first, to set the stage for doing theology in a postmodern context; and second, to show what impact foundationalist epistemological commitments have had on doing theology in the modern context. The authors begin with a brief description of the theological fragmentation in both its liberal and conservative expressions. What they suggest is that the current fragmentation of our theological discourse is a result of the failure of the Enlightenment's version of foundationalism to achieve its end. This foundationalism, according to Grenz and Franke, is a philosophical system that is characterized by central commitments to an objectivist epistemology, a referential theory of meaning, a realist metaphysic, and a correspondence theory of truth. The nonfoundationalist theological method that they articulate and commend grows out of a rejection of each of these philosophical commitments.

An important implication of this nonfoundationalist method has to do with the very conception of theology itself. Rather than seeing theology as primarily the collection and systematization of God-given descriptions of reality, revealed to humankind in the Scriptures, Grenz and Franke suggest that we think of theology as a second-order discipline: as reflection on the life of the church. They give us this working definition: "Christian theology is an ongoing, second-order, contextual discipline that engages in critical and constructive reflection on the faith, life, and practices of the Christian community . . ." (p. 16).

Part two embodies the core of the authors' constructive proposal. Theological reflection draws on three central sources. The first source is Scripture as the "norming norm" for theological reflection. Rejecting foundationalist approaches to the authority of Scripture, in both liberal and conservative constructive accounts, as having actually silenced the Bible in the life of the church, Grenz and Franke explain their nonfoundationalist alternative. Affirming with the *Westminster Confession* that Scripture is the final authority, Grenz and Franke apply contemporary speech-act theory. They argue that the Spirit, through the instrumentality of Scripture, both communicates to the readers the message of God's redemption in Jesus Christ and creates in that community the coming eschatological world, which is a "new creation centered in Jesus Christ" (p. 72). This perlocutionary act of the Spirit in "world formation" involves also the re-

creation of our own identities as members of this new community. "It is in our participation in the gathered community that we are most clearly a 'people of the book.' And it is here that the Spirit's voice speaking through scripture can be most clearly discerned" (p. 92).

The second source for theological reflection is tradition. In this chapter, the authors carefully but briefly delineate the competing understandings of "tradition" from the early patristic era to our postmodern era. Drawing on the philosophical work of Alasdair MacIntyre, they argue that "[t]he Christian tradition is comprised of the historical attempts by the Christian community to explicate and translate faithfully the first-order language, symbols, and practices of the Christian faith, arising from the interaction among community, text and culture, into the various social and cultural contexts, in which that community has been situated" (p. 118). As such, they commend tradition as a resource for theology in that it provides the "hermeneutical trajectory for the Christian theological enterprise" (p. 120). Understanding tradition as a "hermeneutical trajectory" provides theologians with a stabilizing continuity with the past while at the same time allowing for the flexibility needed to adapt to new contexts and concerns. They argue that attending to tradition as a resource for theological reflection can make a number of important contributions. These include insights into the relationship between worship and liturgy; the opportunity to observe the long-term effect of theological formulations; the preservation of classical theological formulations, symbols, and communal practices; the openness of confessional commitments; the eschatological orientation of the church; and the interpretive context for performing the gospel in new and changing cultural situations.

Grenz and Franke argue that the third source for theological reflection is culture. Foundationalist approaches to culture tend to see culture as a unified system of behaviors, ideas, and artifacts. The focus is on the way in which cultures form those ideas and behaviors in producing the "way of life" that it characterizes. The driving question for theology, then, is how Christianity relates to the culture in which it finds itself. Drawing on a variety of contemporary nonfoundationalist voices that suggest that culture is less monolithic and more fissured, Grenz and Franke suggest a more dynamic relationship between theology and culture.

Postmodern approaches see culture much more in terms of the context in which meaning is created. Such an understanding provides both descriptive and prescriptive resources for theological reflection. On the one hand, the theologian must be a student of culture in order to understand the times. "Hearing" the culture entails "scrutinizing" it and ultimately "responding" to what is heard for the sake of the gospel, in order to offer a bridge between the sensitivities of culture and the Christian faith. On the other hand, being a student of culture provides the theologian with insight into the forces that are currently involved in the construction of meaning, both inside and outside the church. Without attention to these forces, the theologian can neither make use of them (a constructive task) nor defend himself against them (a critical task). Without this critical and constructive engagement with culture, the church loses a tremendous resource in its journey toward Christ-likeness.

Part three is a discussion of Christian theology's three focal motifs: Trinity, community, and eschatology. Drawing on the sources of Scripture, tradition, and culture, Grenz and Franke argue that Christian theology is "trinitarian in content, communitarian in focus, and eschatological in orientation" (p. 166).

There is much to be said for this creative work on the theological method. It is well written, carefully researched, and extensive in its engagement with a wide variety of thinkers from both within the church and without. Grenz and Franke use these resources to develop a nuanced position; thus, the book requires careful reading. Readers need to resist the tendency to assume they understand the authors' constructive proposal

based on previous experience with the resources, whether theological or postmodern, on which they draw. For example, in spite of the fact that they draw on Barth's understanding of Scripture, it would be wrong to draw the conclusion that theirs is just another Barthian approach. Their position is similar to Barth's in some ways, but they also carefully distinguish their position from his. These distinctions will be easily overlooked if readers are not careful.

This kind of care is also needed due to the sometimes uncustomary use Grenz and Franke give to otherwise technical philosophical and theological language. As is becoming more and more common in the current literature, Grenz and Franke use "foundationalism" to mean much more than merely an approach to the epistemic structure of warrants. Their "foundationalism" is more of a cluster of philosophical positions, as is "nonfoundationalism." This must be recognized or there will be very little fruitful interaction with this work. Another example, more idiosyncratic to Grenz and Franke, is their use of "rationalist" approach to theology (p. 13) as characterizing not an epistemologically rationalistic approach, but what was called "propositionalism" in Grenz's earlier work, *Revisiting Evangelical Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993).

Some readers are likely to be concerned about the authors' emphasis on theology as a second-order discipline. The fear is that, as a second-order discipline, there will be no place for first-order theological claims, entailing the loss of any normative aspect to theology. Whereas this fear is misplaced, I think it does raise the need for further clarification on the part of the authors. That Grenz and Franke do indeed believe that theology involves first-order claims is evidenced throughout the third part of their work. For example, in their chapter on the Trinity, they argue: "The one God, Christians assert, is triune: Father, Son, and Spirit" (p. 170). This is clearly a normative theological claim. What needs clarification is the relationship between "theology" understood as a second-order discipline and "theology" understood as a first-order claim. If theology is appropriately used as first-order claims and as a second-order discipline, then at least some acknowledgement of this equivocation is needed.

One of the strengths of this work is that it embodies the methodology for which it argues. Heavily informed by a commitment to Scripture and the historic Christian tradition, it attempts to think about method in the context of postmodern philosophical/cultural sensitivities. This, however, will be a most problematic approach for foundationalists who do not share those sensitivities. Unlike most works by evangelicals that are overwhelmingly critical of postmodern sensitivities, Grenz and Franke do not offer critique, but critical appropriation. Foundationalists will find them too uncritical, and charge them—unfairly, in my opinion—with some strong version of skepticism and/or relativism.

This work will no doubt create quite a controversy, especially if the authors are right that contemporary evangelical theology is deeply sympathetic to foundationalist sensitivities. What Grenz and Franke offer us is a theological method for the twenty-first century, and for that the church is significantly in their debt.

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The Pleasures of God: Meditations on God's Delight in Being God. By John Piper. Revised and expanded. Sisters: Multnomah, 2000, 340 pp. + 30 pp. study guide, \$14.00, paper.

No greater delight exists than the unsurpassable and all-satisfying delight of contemplating, savoring, and embracing the fullness of God's infinitely wondrous and all-

sufficient character and person. While many biblical Christians may accept this thesis, what fewer would accept immediately is that this greatest of all delights is in fact true for God as well as for us. That is, not only is it true that *our* greatest delight is in God; even more importantly, *God's* greatest delight is *in God*. According to John Piper, this latter truth is the foundation for the former. The reason we can know that our longing for deep and abiding satisfaction will rightly be met in God is that God, who seeks and does only what is best, finds his own deepest satisfaction in the character, nature, and work that is his own. If God is not satisfied in being God, there is no reason we should think our satisfaction will be found in him. But, happily, God's call to come *to him* to find what truly satisfies (e.g. Isa 55:1–3; Jer 2:11–13; Matt 11:28–30; Rev 22:17) is predicated on his own knowledge and experience of possessing the only true delight there is, in none other than in himself. While Piper states his thesis for this book in many places, perhaps the fullest and richest single statement is this: "The basic goal of my life and the reason for writing this book is to direct the attention of more and more people to the pleasures of God revealed in Scripture; that we might see in the pleasures of God some of the infinite measure of his worth and excellency; and, in seeing this glory, be transformed to the likeness of his Son; and give ourselves so passionately to the work of mercy and missions, that all the nations will see and give glory to our Father in heaven" (p. 47). God delights, then, in being the infinitely glorious God that he is, and God delights in sharing of his bounty with those whom he has created and chosen, from all the peoples on the earth, to share in his unsurpassing richness. In this is God's glory, and in this is our everlasting good. As Piper now is well known for saying, "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him" (p. 312).

This revised and expanded edition of his 1991 book contains ten chapters, each focusing on a different but related aspect of God's pleasure in his own character or work. These chapters move logically from the initial focus on God's greatness and majesty *in himself* to his grace and condescension *toward us*. Piper begins where any treatment of God in relation to creation must, with the fullness of his own self-existence and self-sufficiency as he manifests fully his own nature in the being of his eternally existing Son and in love relationship with his eternal Spirit. God does not create the world out of some lack or deficiency, contrary to much popular theology. Rather, God is in himself, and in his own triune nature, infinitely rich and self-satisfied (chap. 1). Only then can we see creation rightly for what it is, viz., the overflow of his nature in the outward display of his manifold excellencies. Thus, God takes pleasure in the sovereign display of his rule over all that he has made (chap. 2), and in the glorious display of his character in the creation, the work of his hands (chap. 3).

The pleasure of God in his own fame throughout the nations (chap. 4) turns out to be the great energizer of missions. While missions is certainly about the final reality of the eternal destiny of human beings, the heart and core of missions is about something deeper and broader. God seeks that his name be honored, and that it be honored throughout the nations. Missions, then, is most centrally about the spreading of the praise of God among the nations as people turn from their sin and self-reliance to humble and dependent God-reliance, through faith in Christ Jesus the Lord. To the end that people from every tribe, tongue and nation are saved to worship God, God accomplishes the totality of their salvation. In this way, all praise and honor may rightly be given to him alone. He takes pleasure, then, in electing unconditionally those whom he will save (chap. 5). Were we to come to God ultimately by our ability and choice, God would not receive all the honor and glory for our salvation. But because salvation is *his work* alone, and because all boasting is to be done only *in the Lord*, God has revealed his purpose to save those whom *he chooses*. Furthermore, to this same end, he sends his own Son to be the one whom he delights to sacrifice in our place (chap. 6). The staggering truth, that God takes pleasure in bruising his Son, is masterfully described by Piper.

What he makes clear is that God's delight in the death of his Son is so not only because it accomplishes the salvation of the elect, but also, and most centrally, because it brings honor and glory to his name.

Since God has elected from the foundations of the world those whom he will save through the death of his Son, to the glory of his name, it follows that God will do all that is necessary to ensure that his children receive the fullness of blessing he intends them to know (chap. 7). What hope, strength, and joy there is in the realization that God is for us and will not fail to give to us all the riches that are ours, by his grace, in Christ. So too, God delights in hearing and answering the prayers of his people (chap. 8). Prayer is God's tool, designed to involve his people in a spirit of expectancy, faith, and longing for God's work to be done. And prayer gives rise to praise as faith's vision and prayer's longing are realized in the fulfilling of God's will. But prayer also gives rise to kingdom work, the pursuit of obedience and the seeking of public justice that flows from the lives of those dependent wholly on God and his grace (chap. 9). Finally, an act of obedience that God requires of all his people is that of humbly seeking him in his Word (chap. 10). God conceals himself from the worldly wise and reveals himself to humble infants, to show all that the majesty of his glorious wisdom is from above and can never be known through mere human intellectualism. Yet, while we can only know the wisdom of God by humble reception of his revelation, we are also called earnestly to long for and pursue this wisdom, always recognizing our abject poverty of mind and heart apart from the gracious and illuminating work of his Spirit.

New in this revised and updated edition is this tenth chapter dealing with the life of the mind in relation to God's pleasure to reveal his truth to the humble. This chapter alone should be read by all young (as well as old) Christian scholars and pastors, in order to combat pride in our academic accomplishments and ministry successes. Also new is a lengthy and complete set of study questions covering each chapter of the book. The questions help clarify the main points of each chapter, and many are designed to explore the implications of these truths to practical Christian living. One other new feature is the inclusion of an essay Piper published elsewhere on the vexing question of whether there are two wills in God, a will that would want all saved and a will that chooses only some to be saved. This essay is one of the finest treatments of this difficult question, for its endeavor to reconcile the tension within two clear strands of biblical teaching.

The vision of God portrayed in this book is, at one and the same time, both (1) thoroughly biblical, theologically rich and wondrous, and highly exalting of the greatness, goodness and glory of God, while it is (2) nearly unknown in either its basic conceptions or, even more so, in its rich and vivid detail, by the vast majority of those who call themselves conservative, biblical, evangelical Christians. I submit to you that this is a tragic state of affairs. How can it be that so few have been taught such wondrous truth? One solution to this bankruptcy of theological vision would be to have more and more of our Bible school and seminary students read Piper's *Desiring God* and *The Pleasures of God*. These should also be standard fare in church libraries, not to mention the curriculum for Sunday school classes and Bible study groups. No two books capture better, in ways that are understandable to contemporary readers, the vision of the glorious God of the Bible and what this means for living the lives God has called his people to live. If it is true that God is glorified most in us as we are satisfied most in him, then we must possess within ourselves, and present to our students and church members, a vision of God that is *compelling*, one that displays why the pursuit of *him alone* will bring to us the satisfaction for which we long so deeply. The works of John Piper aid this vision, and for this I can only give to God great and abiding thanks.

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God's Lesser Glory: The Diminished God of Open Theism. By Bruce A. Ware. Wheaton: Crossway, 2000, 240 pp., \$15.99 paper.

Bruce Ware is Senior Associate Dean of the School of Theology and Professor of Christian Theology at Southern Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. Perhaps best known as co-editor (with Tom Schreiner) of *The Grace of God, The Bondage of the Will* (Baker, 1995) and *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge and Grace* (Baker, 2000), Ware, however, is anything but a "static" Calvinist. His 1984 Ph.D. dissertation at Fuller was "An Evangelical Reexamination of the Doctrine of the Immutability of God," which research led to "An Evangelical Reformulation of the Doctrine of the Immutability of God" (*JETS* 29 [1986] 431–46). Thus, Ware has himself proposed creative adjustments to the "classical" theological formulation.

This is an exceedingly important volume. To our knowledge, the only previous book-length critique of the openness of God/freewill theism perspective is McGregor Wright's *No Room for Sovereignty: What's Wrong with Freewill Theism* (IVP, 1996). This appeared prior to John Sanders's *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence* (IVP, 1998) and Greg Boyd's *God of the Possible: A Biblical Introduction to the Open View of God* (Baker, 2000), both of which have impacted the escalating debate.

God's Lesser Glory consists of three parts. The introduction, "Why You Should Be Concerned," addresses the "so what?" question by familiarizing readers with the mounting controversy surrounding open theism and the theological "hot spots" the book examines. Part one, "What Does Open Theism Propose?" builds directly on the introduction. Ware succinctly deals with the development of open theism as a theological framework and as a departure from the classical Arminian position (chap. 2), then addresses "The Perceived Benefits of Open Theism" (chap. 3).

Part Two, "What's Wrong with Open Theism's View of God?" responds to Boyd's *God of the Possible* and Sanders's *The God Who Risks*. In Chapter 4, "Assessing Open Theism's Denial of Exhaustive Divine Foreknowledge," Ware critiques both the exegetical procedure of open theism and its subsequent application to key Scriptural passages often touted by open theists as support for their position. Chapter 5 outlines a "Scriptural Affirmation of Exhaustive Divine Foreknowledge" as Ware presents careful discussions of select passages of Scripture, against which open theists are at pains to argue effectively. Chapter 6 then addresses a minimally noticed difficulty in open theism: "The God Who Risks and the Assault on God's Wisdom."

Part Three exposes the problematic practical ramifications of open theism. Ware discusses how this position harms the Christian's prayer life (chap. 7), results in diminished confidence in God's guidance (chap. 8), and creates outright despair in the midst of suffering and pain (chap. 9). Finally, in his conclusion "God's Greater Glory and Our Everlasting Good," Ware restates the weaknesses of open theism and reasserts the orthodox view of God's sovereignty.

As to its strengths: (1) The irenic and even-handed, yet concerned, tone of Ware's treatment strikes a commendable balance. (2) The sketch in the introductory chapter of how this controversy has developed provides a historical context needed by many readers. (3) Ware's exegesis has a *broader* range than that of Sanders and Boyd (e.g. careful discussions of such relevant aspects as Genesis 18, Joseph, Job, Isaiah 41–48, Daniel and prophecy in general), exposing their inconsistencies in (so-called "straight-forward") hermeneutics/exegesis and, in the process, securing exhaustive foreknowledge. This breadth fits in with the figures Ware cites in footnote 2 on p. 100, which seems to assert that passages favoring the classical view of God's foreknowledge outnumber the "apparent counter-evidence" passages 4,695 to 105. (4) Ware's exegesis also probes *deeper* than his openness counterparts (e.g. Genesis 3 and 22, plus 2 Kings 20), exposing the shallowness of their thinking by playing out its doctrinal and practical implications. (5) The dramatic openness overbalance to divine immanence is articulated

clearly. (6) The thorny problems openness theism creates for Christian living are effectively laid bare.

Though *God's Lesser Glory* contains no glaring "weaknesses," there are several areas we believe are underdeveloped or overlooked: (1) The exegesis and theological reflection still need to be broader and deeper. For example, Ware does not touch on Eph 1:4 or Rev 13:8, key passages for both Sanders and Boyd. In addition, Saul's rejection in God's plan (1 Samuel 15) could be handled in a more conclusive fashion by referring to Gen 49:10 and the family tree that crowns Ruth. (2) Though it is helpful for Ware to mention his nuanced relational understanding of divine immutability (see his 1986 *JETS* article), it deserves more in-depth explication, given that the relational angle is a cultural contact point openness is exploiting. (3) Speaking of culture, it is surprising that Ware does not critique the openness viewpoint against its postmodernist backdrop. Since openness writers are quick to accuse classical theists of drinking at the well of Greek philosophy, it is entirely fair to point out the polluted postmodernist air openness thinkers are breathing. (4) Amazingly, there is no mention of "sin" in the entire volume (note the "loud silence" in the index, p. 236). This is undoubtedly due to the fact that openness exponents seldom mention sin and Ware is answering their stated views. However, given that Ware reflects sensitivity to the elevation of man that is openness's other-side-of-the-coin to the humanizing of God, this is a notable "big picture" absence for a theologian of Ware's acumen.

In conclusion, given what is at stake, *God's Lesser Glory* has not received the visibility it deserves. As the readership of openness theism books (supporters, detractors and the ranks of the curious) grows with each successive volume, there must be solid answers readily available to the wide-ranging assertions and radical implications of this thought. Until other up-to-date and focused book-length critiques that are in process appear, Ware's treatment admirably meets those educational and apologetic needs.

Though not quite as readable as Boyd's *God of the Possible*, Ware's writing style is still accessible to readers ranging from scholars to pastors to seminary and Bible college students to high lay level (especially Sunday school and Bible study teachers). As the storm clouds of the first great evangelical theological controversy of the twenty-first century gather, *God's Lesser Glory* should be considered "required reading" in all these categories, on both sides of the dispute.

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