

BOOK REVIEWS

New Dictionary of Biblical Theology. Edited by T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner. Leicester: InterVarsity, 2000, xx + 866 pp., \$39.99.

Biblical and theological dictionaries have long been stretching the definition of the word “dictionary.” The *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (hereafter the *NDBT*) is no exception. The *NDBT* is closer to a comprehensive reference work with articles on many subjects of a particular field (i.e. an encyclopedia) than it is to a reference book containing an alphabetical list of words with definitions (i.e. a dictionary).

The editors of *NDBT* have arranged the work in three parts. Part 1 (pp. 3–112) contains twelve introductory articles. “The articles in this section are intended to provide the reader with a clear statement of the basis upon which the rest of the Dictionary is built” (p. vii). These articles include the following: history of biblical theology, canon, biblical history, hermeneutics, the relationship between the testaments, the unity and diversity of Scripture, and the relationship between systematic theology and biblical theology. Part 2 (pp. 115–363) contains seven articles on biblical corpora, followed by articles on each of the individual books of the Bible. The selected corpora are the following: Genesis to Kings, wisdom books, prophetic books, Synoptic Gospels, Luke-Acts, the Johannine writings, and Paul. Part 3 (pp. 367–863) “consists of articles, arranged alphabetically, on major biblical themes” (p. ix). “Major biblical themes” includes people, places, practices, and concepts.

How are we to assess the contribution made by this volume? On the positive side, the thematic studies can be very helpful. For example, the article on priests gathers and summarizes the biblical data under useful headings. This feature can save the harried pastor valuable time. The introductory articles and discussions of individual books are the most valuable sections. Any reader who is not satisfied with a particular article will at least be able to identify the important issues and gather bibliography.

Nevertheless, I see some problems with the *NDBT*, particularly in its lack of clarity and precision. Since it is not feasible to demonstrate this exhaustively, I have chosen two examples that are representative of similar problems elsewhere in the work.

The first example is from the introductory article entitled “Scripture.” I selected this article because of its obvious importance for the discipline of biblical theology. The article should clarify important issues of methodology within the discipline of biblical theology. The following quotes illustrate a significant failure in achieving clarity. “The inspiration of Scripture, which is itself a historical event, demands historical exegesis of the text” (p. 41). “The inspiration of Scripture also liberates the interpreter from the tyranny of the historical method” (p. 42). I need further clarification to understand how these statements are not contradictory.

The second example is the use of the term “salvation history.” I selected the term because it is a pervasive concept in the work. According to *NDBT*, salvation history is many things. The OT contains its own salvation histories (p. 11). Salvation history is a central theme of the Bible (p. 20). It is a perspective for biblical interpretation (p. 43). It is the actual events of the past (p. 66). It is a central tenet of much of twentieth-century biblical theology (p. 87). It is the idea that God acted in history (p. 87). It is “a Christian approach to the appropriation of the Old Testament” (p. 87). It “is a

recognition that the books of the Bible, while not being uniformly historical in form, all relate to an overarching history" (p. 86). It is the "understanding and exposition of the texts along their chronological line of development" (p. 90).

Should we use the term "salvation history" for all of the things listed above? Can a central theme of the Bible also be a necessary perspective for biblical interpretation? Can a Christian appropriation of the OT be the same thing as something contained within the OT itself? It is quite possible that the term "salvation history" has a precise definition in the mind of each individual author of *NDBT*. Yet individual precision does not translate into precision for the work as a whole. This terminological imprecision results in a methodological imprecision that undermines *NDBT*'s value.

Underlying the topic of salvation history is the question of whether the locus of revelation is history, the text of Scripture, or both. According to *NDBT*, history is the locus of revelation. This is stated explicitly on p. 87, and other articles support the claim as well (see p. 42 for one example). On the other hand, "the Bible offers particular interpretations of the events it does narrate" (p. 50). The Bible implicitly claims "to be giving a divinely inspired account of events" (p. 51). If the answer is both, i.e. history and the text, then the relationship between the two within the realm of biblical theology needs precise articulation that is lacking. This leads to comments that lack clarity, such as the following: "the exegetical reconstruction of historical events related in the Bible" (p. 26), or "evidence points to the Scriptures of Old and New Testament as very nearly congruent with 'revelation' in the sense of the revealed divine actions and words of God" (p. 734).

These two examples illustrate a lack of clarity and precision that the reader of *NDBT* needs to keep in mind. However, the reader can use the work profitably by allowing each article to stand on its own merits.

On a different note, while no dictionary can be all things to all people, the editors have overlooked some important topics. A pastor will not find an article on divorce, money, sex, slavery, or tithe—subjects that may concern the average parishioner. There is no entry for salvation history or typology. Perhaps the most glaring absence is "Messiah." Rather than an article on the concept, there is a cross-reference sending the reader to the article on Jesus Christ. The article on Jesus Christ does not adequately deal with the messianism in the OT, nor should it. The cumulative message about the Messiah in the Hebrew Bible is not limited to the NT referent for the word *Messiah*. (The article on David does contain a section on Davidic messianism in the prophets, but there are no cross-references to help the reader find it.)

Who will benefit from this volume? Experts on a particular subject will find little that is new in the work. They should find it useful in other areas, at least as a jumping-off point. Students will want to consult this work, if only to gather bibliography. Pastors, especially those without access to a college or seminary library, will find this a handy collection of thematic studies.

NDBT focuses on concepts, not just words. This is the correct approach for biblical theology and distinguishes it from lexically based works such as the *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* edited by Colin Brown. On the other hand, other dictionaries include many of the same topics as *NDBT*. For example, if you own the *Baker Theological Dictionary of the Bible* (formerly the *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*), you do not need to purchase *NDBT*. Both volumes attempt to synthesize a theology of the Bible, and I am not convinced that *NDBT* makes a significant new contribution. If you do not own a similar collection, the convenience of having this material in a single volume may be worth your consideration.

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The Race Set Before Us: A Biblical Theology of Perseverance and Assurance. By Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 344 pp., \$21.99 paper.

This book attempts an inductive study on two related themes in Scripture that are important to all evangelicals: perseverance and assurance. As the title suggests, the main metaphor used to unify the discussion is an athletic one: the race. In the first chapter, the authors describe four popular approaches to warnings and admonitions: (1) loss-of-salvation view, (2) loss-of-reward view, (3) test-of-genuineness view, and (4) hypothetical loss-of-salvation view. Advocates of each of these views, the authors argue, ask the wrong question: Is it possible for authentic believers to apostatize and perish forever? (p. 38). The proper question is: What is the function of biblical warnings and admonitions, especially in light of the biblical promises of salvation to the faithful? (pp. 38–39). This book is (mostly) an exegetical and theological analysis of that question and the resulting issues and concerns. Their response is to suggest a fifth approach, which they label God's means-of-salvation view. This view sees the biblical warnings as a *means* God uses to save and preserve his people to the end (p. 40). God's promises are provided to elicit belief unto salvation (which contains both "already" and "not yet" aspects) and to assure believers that God is trustworthy. Said another way, the biblical warnings call Christians to persevere while the promises of God provide the necessary assurance that salvation will be revealed in the last days (cf. 1 Pet 1:5).

Chapters 2 and 3, respectively, address the eschatological tension present in salvation and the necessity of obedient faith in running the race. The fourth chapter presents an exegetical and theological analysis of the biblical warning passages. The authors survey two passages from the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 10; Mark 13), a host of passages from the Pauline epistles (various passages from Romans 1–8; 1 Cor 9:23–27; Phil 2:12–13; 3:8–16; Col 1:21–23), and the five so-called exhortations from Hebrews (2:1–4; 3:1–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; 12:12–29). Here, the authors are at their best. The exegesis is balanced, attentive to context, and their conclusions are carefully reasoned (though not all will agree with them). They engage fully with recent theological debates, such as Lordship salvation vs. free grace, but in the end they argue that the warnings and admonitions of Scripture function as road signs pointing out the narrow way of salvation (p. 206). Chapter 5 addresses those who have fallen out of the race and chap. 6 reflects on God's power for the journey. In the penultimate chapter, the authors turn their attention to the twin theme of assurance. Assurance depends on God's promises, the fruit of the Spirit, and the witness of the Holy Spirit (p. 276). The final chapter, entitled "Running by Divine Appointment," asks the question "Who are those who run to the end and win?" and deals with the issues of election and predestination.

The authors admit that the book's subtitle is a bit misleading, for only NT texts are discussed. There are three indexes (author, subject, and Scripture) that should aid those wanting to go directly to a particular text or issue. There is also an appendix where the authors respond to William Lane Craig's essay, "Lest Anyone Should Fall: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on Perseverance and Apostolic Warnings." There is no bibliography. While the authors do not shy away from complex theological issues, they generally do not use overly technical language. I found their style easy to read and the overarching race metaphor helpful. In addition, Greek words are transliterated, which should enable this book to be enjoyed by a wide range of readers—pastors, students, teachers, scholars, and interested laypersons wrestling with the concerns of perseverance and assurance.

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The God of Promise and the Life of Faith. By Scott Hafemann. Wheaton: Crossway, 2001, 256 pp., \$19.99 paper.

In 1986 the author, on becoming a professor at Taylor University, wisely started his career of Bible teaching by working out his concept of God's purpose in redemptive history. Hafemann's understanding of this matured as he went on teaching and publishing at Taylor and then for eight years at Gordon-Conwell Seminary. His "unity of the Bible" now appears after several years in the Gerald F. Hawthorne Chair of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at Wheaton College.

Hafemann sees God as revealing his purpose in redemptive history in his resting on the Sabbath day after concluding that the abundant blessings he had created for people were indeed "very good" (Gen 1:31). Hence he instituted the Sabbath as a rest day (Exod 20:8–11) to remind people that they would go on enjoying his grace as they honor him by an "obedience from faith" (Rom 1:5). So, for example, obeying God's command to be forgiving (Rom 12:19) starts by honoring God's promise to requite all wrongdoing himself (Deut 32:35), so that benevolence is a believer's only response to wrongdoing (Rom 12:20–21).

All God's commands call for an obedience of faith that glorifies God. They are "promises in disguise" (p. 99) of what God will graciously "do for us as we trust him" (pp. 178–79) with a persevering, though imperfect, obedience from faith. Consequently, people are to obey God "in order to inherit [the blessings of his] future grace" (p. 180). Hafemann draws no distinction between the law and the gospel. The "obedience from faith" (Rom 1:5) that responds to these commands is "an essential expression of what it means to trust in Christ in and of itself" (p. 188).

Indeed, Paul sometimes contrasted the "gospel" with the "law," because before Christ's coming most of Israel had an unregenerate "heart of stone" (Ezek 36:26–27). This skewed her understanding of the law to fit in with her preference for an external, grudging way of obeying God. At Pentecost, however, God gave the Holy Spirit for all peoples who believed in Jesus, and made "one people . . . by grafting Gentiles into the line of the faithful remnant [of Israel] (Rom 11:24)" (p. 212). These people in Paul's one olive tree are regenerated and obey "the original intent of the law [which] speaks to the moral condition of the heart rather than regulating external and symbolic behaviors" (p. 203).

Paul died to this old understanding of the law (Gal 2:19) when he met Christ on the Damascus road (p. 231). At times, however, he spoke of elements in that skewed understanding of the "law" as clashing with components of the gospel, such as "faith" (Gal 3:23–25), "life" (2 Cor 3:6), "the promise" (Gal 3:18), "grace" (Rom 6:14), and the "Spirit" (Gal 5:18). But no such contrasts exist between gospel and the revelatory law given at Sinai (pp. 203–4).

Hafemann views his book as based on "a reassessment of the traditional Lutheran, Calvinistic, and dispensational view of the relationship between the law and the gospel" (p. 244). He seems concerned to derive his understanding of God's whole counsel (Acts 20:27) simply from the interpretational methods of biblical theology. He could have strengthened his argument for identifying the law with the gospel by also citing Rom 3:27, 31; 8:4; 9:32; and Gal 3:21. But this book marks a crucial turning point for what we "ambassadors for Christ" are to persuade people to do in turning from idols to serve the living God (1 Thess 1:9).

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Decolonizing Biblical Studies: A View from the Margins. By Fernando F. Segovia. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000, 177 pp., \$24.00 paper.

It is well known that biblical studies is in a state of flux and pluralism. What is far less clear is how to understand this flux and what to do about it. In this book Segovia brings together eight essays that articulate the different and competing paradigms in biblical studies today, and recommend a *postcolonial* approach as a viable and creative way forward.

On the whole the essays hang together well. Segovia's style is lucid and clear throughout, and this is no mean achievement considering the complexity of the topics he examines. The result is a stimulating book, full of insights, giving a good idea of a direction that biblical studies *could* take. There is also a sustained focus on pedagogy and biblical studies, which is an important but much neglected area.

In Part 1 Segovia discerns four main competing interpretive paradigms in biblical studies today: historical criticism, literary criticism, cultural criticism, and cultural studies. "Cultural studies" represents an emerging fourth paradigm, which takes the flesh-and-blood reader seriously and stresses the nature of all interpretation as construct. This paradigm opens the way to taking social location and colonialism seriously and is Segovia's preferred approach, although he regards the diverse approaches as not mutually exclusive.

In Part 2 Segovia examines the pedagogical discourse that accompanies the different paradigms, using Fitzmyer as his example for historical criticism, Powell for literary criticism, Malina for cultural criticism, and a variety of proposals for cultural studies. Part 3 discusses postcolonial studies and biblical studies, in which Segovia explains why he favors a postcolonial approach even though he insists that it is one among others. The two essays in Part 4 are less integral to the book, but interesting for their somewhat autobiographical and occasional nature.

The topics Segovia addresses are extremely important, and it is refreshing to find the question of interpretive paradigm linked with pedagogical discourse. Segovia has thought long and hard about these issues, and his typology of the discipline as it stands is important in this respect: this type of work is not as common as it should be, but crucial for understanding and forging creative ways forward for biblical studies. Segovia is helpful in opening up the challenges of our "postmodern hour" for biblical interpretation.

I strongly disagree with his preferred postmodern, ideological paradigm, however, some of whose characteristics are as follows. Promotion of a radical diversity of readings of the Bible is inherently virtuous; the resulting "din of authors" is regarded as pedagogically vital. All exegesis is eisegesis (pp. 50–51). Texts have no stable meaning; all text and interpretation is fluid and polyvalent. We should not privilege the canon of Scripture but go beyond it by letting all voices speak and engaging critically with all voices.

The issue of colonialism and Eurocentrism is important for biblical studies, but Segovia's preferred path seems to me to be a capitulation to some of the worst aspects of postmodernism. And, it is largely bad news for the Christian community. Segovia is rightly concerned for "the other," but it is hard to see how this celebration of diversity will help us to attend to "the Other" as he addresses us in Scripture. At the outset of his book, Segovia makes much of the image of speaking in other tongues, which he revisions for his own purposes (pp. 6, 51). In Acts the other tongues enabled the one gospel message to be proclaimed to all. It is hard to see how Segovia's wild pluralism could help in this respect.

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Putting the Truth to Work: The Theory and Practice of Biblical Application. By Daniel M. Doriani. Phillipsburg: P & R, 2001, x + 342 pp., \$17.99 paper.

Doriani writes to fill in a gap in the literature on biblical application. While many useful books cover the topic of interpretation, there are few that devote themselves to the question of the theoretical and practical dimensions of application.

After an engaging introduction, in which he establishes exegesis, covenant, and grace as the foundations for application, Doriani develops his theory of application. He argues that application is neither separate from nor coterminous with exegesis. Instead, there is a “permeable barrier” between the two. Doriani nevertheless acknowledges the helpfulness of distinguishing between the meaning, the significance, and the effects of the text. At this point, Doriani’s discussion would be clarified by an exploration of the way in which meaning can include effects (a point he later introduces but does not relate to his own theoretical construct). The rhetorical intention of a text/author usually includes intended effects as well as cognitive content. Doriani’s theoretical discussion could be more clear at defining the concepts of meaning and application.

In chap. 2, Doriani proposes a theology of application that includes responding to and loving God, learning from biblical history, and imitating God/Christ. He also explores Jesus’ understanding and use of Scripture before studying 2 Tim 3:16–17 in relation to the application of Scripture. The third chapter focuses on the interpreter, and specifically the courage, character, and credibility needed to apply Scripture to his or her audience.

Doriani introduces a grid for understanding the various ways texts can be applied in chaps. 4–6. He delineates seven ways that the text generates application and four crucial questions to be asked of the text. Doriani speaks of the intersection of the seven means and four questions as providing the possibility of 28 areas for exploration when applying texts. Although the idea of 28 potential areas for application is a bit unwieldy, Doriani’s various categories are helpful constructs toward thinking more clearly about the breadth of the application process.

The second half of the book focuses on specific guidelines for application. Beginning with narrative texts, Doriani argues against allegorizing and moralizing narratives. Instead, God (and hence theology) should be understood as the main focus of narrative. Moral guidance *is* provided by narrative, but only in a derivative fashion. (We learn from what the characters do—both rightly and wrongly in relation to *God’s perspective and activity*.) Doriani also vigorously argues that narrative is normative and so conveys an authoritative message.

Doriani moves to discuss how doctrine and ethics arise from the biblical text. Since all Scripture has theological interests, the interpreter should avoid viewing some texts (e.g. narrative) as irrelevant to doctrinal formation. On the other hand, because the text is not a set of abstract, propositional statements about God, attention to contexts is crucial in doctrinal application even when doing more topical investigation, which Doriani then explores. He concludes this chapter (9) with some advice for pastors on teaching doctrine to their congregations. It might be helpful to note here that Doriani consistently ties application to preaching/teaching. While he does mention pastoral care, he limits most of his discussion of application to how preachers might apply the text (and male preachers specifically).

In his chapters on applying ethical texts, Doriani provides guidelines for applying law. He also provides questions to help in the application of more difficult cases, such as head coverings. Finally, he proposes a theology of law, arguing that OT law should be understood holistically by asking, “How would his law shape Israel as a society that serves as a light for every other society?” While Doriani’s discussion of biblical law is thorough, his guidelines for applying OT law are inconsistent. Early on, he acknowl-

edges that some laws should be viewed as fulfilled (and therefore not requiring obedience). Yet later in the same chapter, he asserts that “we must find and reapply the principles in every law” (p. 275, cf. p. 268). Doriani concludes his book with a summary that reemphasizes the theme of grace that should weave through efforts at application.

Doriani demonstrates a breadth of reading and synthesis from such diverse areas as exegesis, hermeneutics, ethics, linguistics, and narrative theory. His warnings and insights regarding narrative texts are particularly helpful, given the tendency in evangelical circles to moralize narratives in teaching and ignore their normativity in theology. In addition, Doriani provides numerous and often extended examples of the principles he proposes. While no interpreter will agree with every exegetical decision reflected in these examples, Doriani’s willingness to include many examples of his own work in application is commendable and helpful in illustrating his guidelines.

Doriani’s book could provide a starting point for conversations around biblical application in the Church and the academy. It attempts to cover a broad range of issues associated with application and so provides an introduction to application most helpful to pastors (his focused audience at many points). Other books will likely address specific issues more thoroughly (cf. William Webb’s *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals* concerning what is culturally bound in Scripture, which is reviewed below). Nevertheless, there is much that is helpful in Doriani’s book, and his recurring emphasis on the foundation of grace in application is a needed and welcome reminder as we seek to hear the biblical message across the centuries.

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Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis. By William J. Webb. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 301 pp., \$24.99 paper.

This groundbreaking study develops a hermeneutic for our transcultural interpretation and application of the ethical teachings of the Bible. As Webb argues, “Sometimes, by simply ‘doing’ the words of the text we automatically fulfill its spirit today”—a point some readers may miss because this is not the focus of his book. “At other times, however, living out the Bible’s literal words in our modern context fails to fulfill its redemptive spirit” (p. 30). Here is the focus of his book: the need to note the “redemptive-movement” of the Bible’s ethical teachings. Specifically, the Bible has “come a long way” relative to its contemporary cultural setting (criterion #1), but sometimes it still has a “long way to go” (criterion #11) toward God’s ultimate ethical standard. To suggest a need to improve on the Bible’s ethical teaching on some subjects sounds strange for those committed to the Bible’s divine authority, as Webb is. This is not a reference to progressive revelation. It sounds more like Richard Hays’s biblical “trajectories” concerning divorce.

To discern which biblical teachings are culture-bound and which are to be accepted as transculturally normative, Webb suggests a “redemptive-movement” hermeneutic of eighteen criteria and illustrates these by his analyses of the Bible’s teachings on slaves, women, and homosexuals (and some fifty other issues, many of which we never preach but which nevertheless fuel secular ethicists’ trashing of biblical ethics).

Webb introduces each of his eighteen criteria with an analysis of the “neutral,” currently undisputed issue of slavery, which we agree ought to be abolished, though the Bible does not explicitly teach abolition. This illustrates his “ $X \Rightarrow Y \Rightarrow Z$ Principle,” in which X indicates the perspective of the original culture at the time the biblical passage

was written, Y indicates the teaching of the “isolated words” of the Bible on the subject, and Z indicates an ultimate ethic intended by God. From the perspective of X, the “isolated words” of the Bible (Y) may look (and be) redemptive. From a perspective closer to Z, the “isolated words” of the Bible may look (and be) regressive.

Some disputed ethical teachings of the Bible (e.g. many slavery and women passages) were not written to establish an ultimate ethic, a utopian society with complete justice and equity, Webb argues. In applying his hermeneutic to the question of homosexual behavior (currently disputed), Webb sees no liberalizing move from the express condemnation of Scripture, and he critiques evangelicals who see such a shift.

In Scripture we see the wisdom of God expressed in pastoral, pedagogical, evangelistic, ancient world, and even social-science components. Some evangelicals may get needlessly uneasy with his use of scientific evidence (criterion #18) and the pragmatics of biblical cultures and ours (criterion #17) in biblical hermeneutics.

Though Richard Longenecker and others have argued for a “developmental hermeneutic” that leads to an egalitarian view of the roles of men and women in the home and church, Webb argues that a responsible “redemptive-movement” hermeneutic should not take us quite that far, even on the basis of God’s redemptive plan. Instead, he humbly argues for an “ultra-soft patriarchy” or a “complimentary egalitarianism and interdependence” including a “servant-like attitude in relationships” between men and women in the home and church.

In criterion #6, Webb cautions against accepting pre-fall creation practices as normative (e.g. vegetarian diet, farming as the “biblical” vocation and walking as the “biblical” mode of locomotion). Such cautions were missed in Terrance Tiessen’s 1993 *JETS* article, “Toward a Hermeneutic for Discerning Universal Moral Absolutes.”

On the whole, Webb has convinced me that he has generated a helpful hermeneutical tool, especially his “ladder of abstraction” (p. 210), though his applications (especially concerning women and homosexuals) will naturally be disputed at various points both by some who share Webb’s high view of biblical authority and by many who do not. Though less historical than Willard Swartley’s *Slavery, Sabbath, War and Women*, this carefully nuanced hermeneutic should be most helpful for future discussions on many fronts as a required reading in ethics and hermeneutics courses.

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Slaves, Women and Homosexuals: Exploring the Hermeneutics of Cultural Analysis. By William J. Webb. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 301 pp., \$24.99 paper.

A student recently intercepted me in my office to ply me with the question of how one is supposed to make sense of Leviticus 27. In the context of a section dealing with redeeming vows, the text ascribes lesser monetary value to women than to men. The student asked, “Even if that might possibly be referring to the relatively greater productivity potential of males by virtue of their increased physical strength, which such an agrarian culture would understandably prize, it still says, ‘*The Lord said . . .*’ How can one dismiss such a text as ‘cultural’ and therefore irrelevant for our time when it comes ‘packaged’ with divine sanction like that?” Our interchange raised the ever-relevant question not only of how one determines what in Scripture is culturally bound but also in what sense or on what level even those texts which are deemed as such can be revelatory.

Shortly thereafter I sat down to tackle William Webb's intriguing tome curiously (at first glance) titled *Slaves, Women and Homosexuals*. What I had been trying to convey to my student inquirer found clear, cogent articulation in this engaging and well-researched work. The book begins with an illuminating introductory discussion of the role of culture in the formation of the biblical text and a brief delineation of various options regarding two of the most controversial issues facing the church today: women and homosexuality. Then he proceeds to articulate and apply each of 18 hermeneutical criteria first toward neutral examples (many of which revolve around the now largely defused issue of slavery) before turning his sights toward the application of each criterion to the issues of women and homosexuality, respectively, followed by evaluative and summative comments. With sensitivity to the varying range of each criterion's compelling quality, the author innovatively clusters the criteria under the following four categories: persuasive, moderately persuasive, inconclusive, and extrascriptural. Thus the reader is plunged into the world of hermeneutics using the profitable methodology of applying this multifaceted interpretive grid in case-study fashion to each of the three subject areas identified in the book's title.

In this book Webb offers a guide by which to differentiate elements in the biblical text that are culturally bound from those which are transcultural. The aim is to assist the reader in discerning what should legitimately be applied today and what should be discontinued. Such a roadmap entails not only careful exegesis of the literary-historical factors inherent in a text but also attentiveness to the ways in which the original text was culturally formed as well as sensitivity to how the spirit of the text can be faithfully conveyed in terms pertinent to our modern culture. To accomplish this, Webb argues for an approach to biblical interpretation that goes beyond a "static hermeneutic," which analyzes isolated words in a text and then attempts to find cultural equivalents for today. Such a static approach would, for example, extract the injunction given to slaves to "submit to" and "obey" their masters and then proceed to apply it to modern-day employee-employer relations, even to the grotesque extent of submitting to physical beatings from one's employer for the sake of the gospel, as urged in 1 Pet 2:18–25. What is needed, according to Webb, is what he calls a "redemptive-movement" hermeneutic that not only attends to a careful exegesis of the words within a given text but also seeks "to engage the redemptive spirit of the text in a way that moves the contemporary appropriation of the text beyond its original-application framing" (p. 30).

While this model might seem to bear striking similarity to the "liberative criterion" employed as part of a "hermeneutics of suspicion" approach championed by feminists such as Rosemary Radford Reuther (i.e. only what is deemed "liberative" in a text is held to be authoritative), it is distinct from such an approach in several ways. First, the redemptive spirit cannot be extracted from the words as if it were detachable from the text, nor can it be imposed from beyond the text. The spirit of a text is not antithetical to the words but rather fused together with them. Secondly, Webb's model affirms the authoritative bearing of all Scripture while at the same time recognizing the possibility of a multi-level ethic pervading various biblical texts. Thus, for example, while divorce stands clearly against the ideal ethic of lifelong covenantal marriage, the divorce legislation of Deut 24:1–4 exhibits a redemptive dynamic by taking into account the reality of living in a world of fallen relationships and consequently setting forth ethical prescriptions that were meant to accord unprecedented rights for the wife and restrain the damage such marital ruptures could inflict on each party. The multi-level ethic and redemptive movement are clearly captured by the following summary statement: "If one carries the spirit of limiting damages and reducing alienation within human relationships to its logical conclusion, one ends up with the ideal of restored, loving relationships" (p. 42). The trajectory in this model is an increasingly redemptive

movement from the past toward an ultimate future ideal via the present, perceivable even in “ugly texts” that appear in their original formulation to be irredeemably sexist and oppressive by current standards.

Such is the underlying drumbeat sounding forth throughout this book. While Webb’s conclusions clearly favor a “complementary egalitarian” perspective with respect to the texts addressing women’s issues, he is not unsympathetic to what he terms the “ultra-soft patriarchal” view. Not all will be convinced by his detection of implicit “hints of patriarchy” in the original pre-fall narratives of Genesis 1 and 2, though he acknowledges that these only find explicit expression in the post-fall account of Genesis 3. Egalitarians might contest arguments prohibiting women from exercising authoritative teaching roles in the church (e.g. 1 Tim 2:11–15) that appear to hinge upon the debatable premise that Genesis 2 attaches superior status to the male by virtue of having been created prior to the woman. Paul’s highlighting of male/female *interdependence* in 1 Cor 11:11–12 surely relativizes the significance of the order of creation argument in terms of gender status. Even while conceding the possibility of such patriarchal “whispers,” Webb helpfully highlights numerous scriptural “breakouts” in which primogeniture logic is overturned, as God periodically “abandons the norm of granting greater status and honor to those first within the ‘creative order’” (p. 136). Furthermore, Webb’s opting for a “complementary egalitarian” position (in contradistinction to “secular egalitarianism”) affirms his view that “men and women can and should function in complementary ways” (p. 241). Aside from the sole example given of women’s irreplaceable role in the early stages of childrearing, there is little hint given as to how this complementary role configuration is to be determined. It would have been profitable perhaps to venture some correlation between the concept of complementary roles and giftedness. Whose role is it to take charge of family finances, for instance? What is involved in “fleshing out” concretely this ideal of complementarity? His recognition for the “need to tread softly” shows commendable caution to avoid rigid role delineations derived largely from gender stereotyping.

Given Webb’s reliance on the “redemptive-movement,” one might wonder if such logic could lend advocacy to monogamous, covenantal homosexuality on the basis of a redemptive spirit blowing through seemingly prohibitive texts similar to that discernible in texts seemingly constrictive of women’s roles. However, it soon becomes apparent that while such question marks can arise within the presentation of any given criterion, the cumulative force of the designated criteria taken together provides a compelling case for a redemptive trajectory that, unlike that of slavery and women’s issues, moves not in the direction of less restriction but rather total prohibition. I found his sensitivity to recent research suggesting possible biological and environmental factors that might contribute to a non-voluntary homosexual *orientation* especially illuminating. While not compromising his conviction that biblical injunctions against homosexual *activity* are transcultural and therefore binding today, he suggests a “sliding scale of culpability” by which to regard those who struggle with homosexual inclinations. Not all readers will be comfortable with that phrase, suspicious that it smuggles in the back door a measure of approbation that he has just disallowed. I, however, found that expression refreshingly nuanced in a manner that both upholds biblical authority and extends the kind of compassion mandated by Christ in his teachings and modeled by personal example.

An inclusion of numerous charts and diagrams assists the reader in tracking with the author’s key concepts. Especially impressive is Webb’s even-handed, fair treatment of the interpretive options and counter-arguments. In addition, a commendable display of scholarly humility is clearly evident in a concluding chapter disarmingly titled “What If I Am Wrong?” Reminiscent of Karl Barth’s exhortation to scholars to extend the purview of forgiving grace to include not only one’s own theological sins but those of one’s

fellow theologians, Webb's disclaimer reminds the reader that even the most carefully crafted argument must nevertheless be situated contextually within the human condition of "seeing through a glass darkly." Readers will be amply rewarded with a careful reading of this important and timely contribution to the field of biblical hermeneutics.

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Gospel Handles: Finding New Connections in Biblical Texts. By Francis C. Rossow. St. Louis: Concordia, 2001, 352 pp., n.p. paper.

This book promises what every preacher needs: aid in sermon preparation. And the author includes many insights a preacher might want to take up. For example, on the temptation story in Matt 4:1–11 he says, "Jesus' use of Scripture to combat all three of Satan's temptations suggests the truth that the Gospel is not only God's power unto salvation but also God's power for everyday living" (p. 28). Then, on John 2:1–11, on the miracle at the wedding in Cana, it is noted that Jesus "is not merely flexing His messianic muscles or flashing messianic credentials. A need arises, Jesus reacts with compassion. . . . The miracles are acts of philanthropy as well as acts of power" (p. 276).

However, the textual analyses in this book—there are 35 entries offered for Mark, for example, covering most but not all of the book—are not the traditional homiletical helps. The author (longtime professor of homiletics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri) acknowledges that he has provided no thorough studies of the texts he covers. Instead, perhaps propelled by his Lutheran tradition, which emphasizes the Christological center of Scripture and could be said to look for the Spirit in the letter, he focuses on the gospel message in each pericope.

The preface explains that each short entry (1–2 pages) offers two approaches to a given passage. The first is intended to answer such questions as: What does the text say about the gospel, explicitly and/or implicitly? This approach is fulfilled mostly by general comments that, unfortunately, frequently do not make clear the possible intentions of the Gospel writers.

The second approach is the most distinct—perhaps, for some readers, the most disturbing. It is called the "Bonus Gospel via Gospel Handle." From the explanation (pp. 10–12) and the examples, a "Gospel Handle" is shown to be a word, phrase, or idea in the text, which the preacher can use as a bridge (or handle) to another account of the gospel somewhere else in the Bible. An explanatory example given is of the word "hills" in Ps 121:1 ("I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help"). "Hills" is used as a bridge to the idea of gazing at the person and work of Jesus on the "hill" of Calvary to gain God's help.

What we make of this approach is crucial, for on it depends much of the usefulness of this book. Though not noticed in this book, it is true that Paul derived meaning from texts through word association (*gezerah shawah*). Yet, in our 21st-century preaching, is mere uncontrolled word association an adequate or even legitimate means of discovering and conveying the first-century message of the biblical writers? In answering that question readers may prefer to consider, for example, Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text: Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Eerdmans, 1988).

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To Begin with, God Created . . . : Biblical Theologies of Creation. By Karl Löning and Erich Zenger. Translated by Omar Kaste. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000, x + 200 pp., \$39.95 paper.

To Begin with, God Created . . . is a collection of essays that originated as a series of lectures presented at the Catholic Faculty of Theology in Münster. These essays seek (1) to demonstrate that the message of the Bible is significantly more influenced by the theology of creation than many would suppose and (2) to draw out the relevance of creation theology for the Church today. A subtheme in the book is that creation theology and salvation theology belong together.

As the subtitle indicates, a variety of creation theologies come to expression in the Bible. Zenger, professor of OT, and Löning, professor of NT, blend their areas of expertise for the purpose of bringing the two testaments into dialogue so that “the single basic message would become audible” (p. vii).

The essays are divided into four sections: I. Ideas About the Beginning of Creation; II. Personification of the Creative Beginning; III. The World as the Creation of a Merciful God; and IV. Creation, Torah, and God’s Rule (Psalm 19). There are fifteen essays in total. Included are topics such as the interplay of chaos and cosmos, the eschatology of creation, Lady Wisdom, *Logos*, the flood story, the relation of the creation of the world to the creation of Israel, creation and the wisdom of Jesus, and the role of the Spirit in the realization of God’s creation purpose.

Evangelicals interested in creation theology will find this volume challenging and stimulating. The challenge and the stimulation come from the fact that the essays are written from a German critical and a Roman Catholic perspective. For example, in the opening section the view is set forth that Genesis 1 teaches a relative and not an absolute beginning and that creation was shaped out of something and not out of nothing. While some evangelicals are at home with these ideas, most are not. All, however, will benefit, in my estimation, from the excellent discussion in this context of the interface between chaos and cosmos in the theology of the Bible and in the fabric of life.

Whether for one’s own personal reflection on creation theology or for use as a text in a class on such theology, *To Begin with, God Created . . . : Biblical Theologies of Creation* will serve as good grist for the mill.

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The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable and Relevant? By Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001, 239 pp., \$12.99 paper.

Walter Kaiser is a very well-respected and prolific OT scholar, as well as a leader in the evangelical Church, and it is no surprise that he has written yet another comprehensive and helpful book. Kaiser envisions the book to be an OT counterpart to F. F. Bruce’s *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, although Kaiser is much more comprehensive in his approach.

After a brief introduction, *Does It Matter?*, Kaiser divides his book into four parts: (1) Are the Old Testament Canon and Text Reliable?; (2) Is the History of the Old Testament Reliable?; (3) Is the Message of the Old Testament Reliable?; and (4) Is the Message of the Old Testament Relevant for Today? He concludes with an epilogue: What is the Old Testament All About? In this division of material, Kaiser recognizes the differences of the issues surrounding the historicity of the text and the message of the text,

so he divides his book accordingly. The second section of the book deals with the former and the third section deals with the latter.

A strength of the book is the manner in which Kaiser addresses a subject that is both complicated and difficult and explains it in a manner understandable for both scholar and layperson alike. His personable style is clearly evident in his discussions of the issues, which include such topics as the determination of the canon, the preservation of the text (even touching on issues such as the *Urtext*), a systematic handling of some of the major problems in the early chapters of Genesis, the historicity of the patriarchs, the role of archaeology in illuminating the Bible, the evidence concerning the exodus and the conquest, and the chronology of the kings. Kaiser's approach in using the text portions of the book to remain focused on explaining the issues (scholarly yet understandable) and using the footnotes to take the reader deeper into the issues (access to more academic resources and issues) is critical to the book's understandability and usefulness.

I found two chapters particularly helpful, because they provide a classic example of Kaiser's ability to explain an involved issue in a manner that both scholar and layman alike can appreciate. In chaps. 4 and 5, Kaiser focuses on a refutation of Gunkel's *The Legends of Genesis* (New York: Schocken, 1964) and the six points that, according to Gunkel, demonstrate that Genesis is not literal history, but rather "legend," reflecting "a pre-literary and uncritical stage of society" (pp. 55–56). Kaiser methodically evaluates each of Gunkel's six points in light of the biblical text and clearly demonstrates the reliability of these first eleven chapters in Genesis. These two chapters are actually similar to his "The Literary Form of Genesis 1–11" already published in *New Perspectives on the Old Testament* (Waco, TX: Word, 1970).

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A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament. By Bruce C. Birch, Walter Brueggemann, Terence E. Fretheim, and David L. Petersen. Nashville: Abingdon, 1999, 475 pp., \$40.00 paper.

Written primarily for beginning seminary students, this volume attempts to introduce the reader to the OT in its dual roles as a witness to ancient Israel and as a witness to both church and synagogue. Supplementary in nature, the work is intended for use with other introductory materials. Consequently, its contents are not comprehensive, but aim "to broaden understanding of theological claims of the text and to stimulate thinking about how such texts handed down through generations in communities of faith can speak a pertinent theological word to the challenges of faith in our own time" (p. 12).

Chapter 1 introduces the problem of reading the OT in its ancient historical context, as well as the need to understand it critically as a canonical document that must be interpreted by the modern Church, which recognizes its diversity and continuity of contents. Chapters 2 through 12 move through the OT in accordance with the Hebrew canon (Law, Prophets, and Writings). These chapters are organized around selected "Key topics" and "Key texts." These key topics and texts are comprehensive in nature. For example, the key topics of chap. 2 ("The Created Order and the Re-Creation of Broken Order") are "creation and the creator," "the human role," "broken creation," and "primeval history," while Genesis 1–11 is listed as the key text. Similarly, the key topics for chap. 3 ("Promises Made, Threatened, and Fulfilled") are "the promise to the

ancestors" and "the Joseph story," while Genesis 12–50 is listed as the key text. Stating the topics and texts in such a broad format allows the authors to highlight those topics and texts which best illustrate the particular theological issues discussed.

The authors do not ignore the critical issues that might indicate a different ordering of the material, but specify that "the Hebrew canon is the most appropriate framework for a study directed to the use of the Old Testament in the life of the church" (p. 12). The use of this canonical approach is quite effective. Scholarship has frequently shown an inability to balance critical issues with canonical ones, often giving more attention to one and less to the other. However, the holistic (canonical) method embraced by this work serves to introduce seminary students to critical issues in a context that allows comparison and contrast of two approaches which have traditionally been seen as incompatible: historical critical problems vs. the canonical text. Such an approach is also very compatible with the introductory learning level of the beginning seminary student. Ideas are put forward in a clearly written, straightforward style, without intrusive footnotes or parenthetical notations. In this way the ideas can be gleaned first, and expanded later when looking for areas of supplementary reading in the endnotes and bibliography.

This work fits very well with the present trend of scholarship away from the atomization of the text to more holistic approaches, which is a welcome corrective. As with other works of this category, however, this may cause a problem for some beginning seminary students. More than a decade of experience in teaching critical issues to uninitiated evangelical students has taught me the difficulty such students have in discerning the difference between the holistic/canonical approaches of many scholars and those of inspiration as espoused by evangelical scholarship. More specifically, the beginning theological student often confuses terms such as "theological," "canonical," and the like with the doctrine of inspiration. Therefore, because a work of this nature can prove problematic for the uninitiated, the evangelical scholar/teacher should go the extra mile to help students understand the differences between these two approaches.

Even so, the book is a very useful contribution of scholarship to the problem of how to read and interpret the ancient text of the OT in a way that is relevant to the modern believer. As such, seminary librarians, teachers of introductions, and qualified students will find this book an excellent acquisition, especially when used alongside other textbooks.

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The Holy City: Jerusalem in the Theology of the Old Testament. By Leslie J. Hoppe. Collegeville: Liturgical, 2000, 191 pp., \$17.95 paper.

The book begins (chap. 1) with a short review of the importance of Jerusalem in Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. The thesis here is that Jerusalem is a topic of urgent importance to the three faiths. It is prominent in Jewish prayers and devotion. Christians made it a place of pilgrimage from the early centuries. Islam uses Jerusalem to proclaim its supremacy over Christianity. The outcome of the review is that Jerusalem is a place of intractable conflict between the religions.

There are good observations about the theological differences between early Jewish and Christian perceptions of the city in relation to the "heavenly Jerusalem," with Christians ready to allegorize and therefore to diminish the city's importance. However, the interest lies more on the historical significance of theological differences than on theological analysis itself.

The ensuing chapters focus in turn on Zion/Jerusalem in the Psalms, the Deuteronomistic tradition, Isaiah 1–39, other preexilic and exilic prophecies of judgment, “Second Isaiah,” the restoration, and visions of the “New Jerusalem.” This last section deals with “apocalyptic” texts, which here include Isaiah 24–27, 56–66, as well as pseudepigraphical works and the Dead Sea Scrolls. A final chapter turns to the books of Mac-cabees, Judith, Baruch, Jubilees, under the title “The Liberated City.”

What does the author do with all the material? For the most part the discussions are in terms of the biblical “horizon.” The conclusions to each chapter mainly describe how the books in question treated the Zion hope. At this level the book is informative and useful, and so would make a good text for focused exegetical discussion on the topic of Jerusalem in the OT. I have some quibbles (for example, the disjunction made between “Servant” and “Zion” in Isaiah 40–55). However, issues of this sort are the stuff of ongoing exegetical debate.

The more important question posed by the book is how to draw conclusions for theology out of the variety of material encountered. This larger question is not faced directly to the extent that one might expect. It surfaces, for example, in the conclusions to the final chapter, where the danger is recognized of “[extrapolating] the perspectives of one strand of the tradition into universally valid theological principles” (p. 161). The author’s answer there is to prefer attitudes of non-resistance to “nationalism.” This kind of resolution can raise as many problems as it solves. How, if at all, might we learn from the more war-like parts of the OT? Do we in any case rightly understand any of the texts reviewed as promoting “nationalism,” or in any other modern categories? The hermeneutical danger, as always, is that we find in the biblical text a justification for views that we already hold on other grounds. The present volume can serve as a prelude to theological discussion of the significance of Jerusalem, but it does not venture very far onto the ground of that discussion itself.

This prompts the final comment that the catalyst for the book’s analysis—the thesis that Jerusalem is a topic of urgent importance for the three faiths—finds few strong echoes in the performance or the conclusions. An “Epilogue,” focused on 2 Baruch, finds that both Judaism and Christianity in their different ways subordinated Jerusalem and temple to matters closer to the heart of the respective faiths (pp. 166–67). This is true as far as it goes. But I wonder whether the author’s broadly inclusive target audience (“people of faith,” p. 161) has attenuated the theological project. If the book is conceived as an exercise in reconciliation among the faiths, it may be that such a goal militates against interesting theological development.

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Priesthood in Ancient Israel. By William R. Millar. Understanding Biblical Themes. St. Louis: Chalice, 2001, viii + 126 pp., \$17.99 paper.

Millar’s central thesis that is the OT shows us two priestly styles: that of the Zadokite Aaronides and that of the Mushites. (He clarifies that “Mushite is an adjective built from the names of Moses,” p. 10). Millar hangs this fundamental distinction on the tenuous string identifying Abiathar as a Mushite Levite instead of an Aaronid Levite. (But, Abiathar descended from Phinehas son of Eli, and thus from Ithamar son of Aaron.) He sets out the distinctions between these two priestly parties as follows (pp. 30, 86):

Aaronide Zadokites

Late literary strata

Mushite Levites

Earlier cluster of literary strata

Center of meaning: Jerusalem/Zion	Center of meaning: wilderness/Horeb
Sacred space: inside/Temple	Sacred space: outside/wilderness
Theophany as fire in temple	Theophany as fire at Horeb
Believers withdraw into the holy	Believers draw into relationship
The holy embraces perfection	The holy embraces imperfection
God establishes boundaries	God breaks through boundaries
Holy reaches toward discipline	Holy reaches toward wholeness
Moves from vulnerability to stability	Moves from slavery to freedom
Genealogy: Zadok back to Aaron	Genealogy: Abiathar back to Moses

He then presents two problematic hypotheses to establish this dubious contrast: First, he states that “[S]tories about kinds in Samuel/Kings and Chronicles often tell us more about priests than they tell us about kings” (pp. 10–11). So he constantly hears priestly voices speaking in the royal narratives of Samuel/Kings and Chronicles, which he surveys at some length. One wonders, Why isn’t it that they tell us more about *prophets* than about kings or priests, since prophets seem to have been the primary royal historians?

Second, Millar argues that it is important to hear these “perspectives” that lie hidden in the royal stories. He speaks often of “speech within speech” and of reconstructing the “voice” of some marginalized group. He says, “A single integrated text can carry multiple voices. . . . There can sometimes be a concealed message from the author to the reader that is different from, and may even contradict, the surface message of the text” (p. 88). Often, he gives precedence to a canonically marginalized voice—lending it a more normative stance than the canon does (e.g. the legitimacy of Abiathar’s priesthood).

Because Millar is always attempting to reconstruct a hidden voice of the “implied author,” he frequently falls victim to the temptation to adopt a shaky reconstruction in the place of a straightforward story. He even considers his reconstructed “implied author” to be “the ‘plane of ultimate semantic authority,’ to use the language of Mikhail Bakhtin” (p. 36, n. 2). This is a poor substitute for authorial intent and canonical meaning.

We must conclude that Millar’s work tells us more about scholars such as R. E. Friedman and R. Polzin’s reader theories than it does about priesthood in ancient Israel.

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Deictic Viewpoint in Biblical Hebrew Text: A Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Analysis of the Particle ׀. By Carl M. Follingstad. Dallas: SIL International, 2001, \$49.00.

Could you account for and correctly translate the Hebrew word *ki*, which occurs ca. 4500 times in the OT? Would you be able to explain to your students why not to translate, “For because of the anger of the Lord” (2 Kgs 24:20, ESV), but rather, “Indeed, Jerusalem and Judah so angered the Lord” (NRSV), even if this might seem less accurate in relation to Hebrew? How would you explain the choice to your students in linguistic terms, with its implications for translation, literary reading, and exegesis?

Impossible? Well, not according to Follingstad (p. 157). This dissertation is a major *tour de force* born out of the search of a young Wycliffe Bible translator when in the late 1980s he discovered a remarkable focus particle in his field language and thus was urged to “feel strongly about particles,” to quote eminent linguist Wierzbicka (p. 128).

Put this lad at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam in company with experts on translation like Lénart de Regt and the Hebrew computational linguistics scholar and director of *Werground Informatica*, Eep Talstra, and after years of diligent study you get an almost 700-page, densely written, and extremely well-researched dissertation with fresh approaches and results to help us understand and translate *ki* in biblical Hebrew.

In excellent imagery from nuclear physics, Follingstad divides the first half of his dissertation (pp. 1–136) into three main parts, moving from “Confusing Traces” to “Developing and Applying a Particle Accelerator” and then to “Defining and Explaining the Particle Traces.” This particle accelerator turns out to produce a flat rejection of almost all prior scholarship to the effect that *ki* is *not* a logical causal conjunction, but rather a deictic and focal particle as well as a complementizer.

Part I (pp. 1–63) is a first orientation on the ubiquitous and troublesome challenging *ki* groping right back to rabbinical debate on interpretation. Being the second-most-frequent word in Hebrew, *ki* is apparently in scholars’ opinion used in unlimited polysemy and therefore is a key problem in the Hebrew particle system and a serious challenge for Bible translation. After a survey of examples of the usual semantic interpretations (pp. 9–14), ancient and modern grammarians are consulted and scholars with a deictic and perspectival view singled out (e.g. Muraoka and van Wolde, pp. 51–66).

Part II (pp. 64–119) develops a linguistic method for distributional analysis of particles like *ki* in syntactic clause clusters, using the *Werkgroep Informatica* database. Follingstad’s own particle accelerator registers and labels all significant features for all *ki* clauses in Joshua-Kings and Isaiah 1–39 (pp. 77–94), and these are listed in full with the registration in an appendix (more than 1000 examples, pp. 610–42). A first survey of distributional data leads Follingstad to reject the semantic and causal solution for *ki* because it does not at all behave syntactically like a prototypical conjunction (p. 113).

Part III (pp. 120–302) then argues for a discourse deictic interpretation of *ki* and explores the contrastive relationships to other particles like *’äšer*, *wəhinneh* and *lē’môr* as complementizers (pp. 152–55) and evidentials (pp. 158–60), and especially *ki* and *wəhinneh* as focus particles (pp. 155–58). Hebrew *ki* is pinned down to a “polar focus” particle, not a causal, asseverative, or temporal conjunction (p. 157). Then comes the real cue. Cognitive grammar’s “Mental Space Theory” is introduced as a way to account for how viewpoint shifts between narrator, character, and reader and affects syntax and interpretation (pp. 160–62). The rest of Part III elaborates on the theory of base, viewpoint, focus, and access path between communicative participants in cognitive grammar. The interpretations of *ki* in narrative and direct discourse are then explained in terms of this novel approach.

The second half of the dissertation, some 300 pages, presents details from Follingstad’s work in numerous appendixes rich in material and ranging from Hebrew computational displays to in-depth presentations of current scholarship on the issues raised by the dissertation.

Follingstad’s very impressive dissertation is an outstanding example of how far paradigmatic shifts may take us, if young scholars are trained in linguistic field work and apply their skills to the study of Hebrew grammar. It is to my knowledge the first major attempt to exploit cognitive grammar so extensively to Hebrew syntax, and this alone demands attentions. Time will tell to what extent this novel proposal will have to be modified or even at points rejected. The case is stated so strongly that I at least am forced to seriously consider this alternative, even if it seems overstated and one-sided at some places. The real advantage is that Follingstad shows his hand and allows others to engage independently with the data.

I am seriously considering putting Follingstad’s dissertation on my top ten hit list of books that Ph.D. students of Hebrew linguistics must study. The data are published, the dissertation very well structured with lots of previews and summaries to guide the

reader to conclusions, and key phrases are helpfully boldfaced. Current literature in the field is treated masterfully, and in addition, the price is reasonable. Unfortunately, there are no indexes of scholars, biblical references, subjects, or key terms, so it is almost impossible to use the book as a reference tool. Furthermore, the grammatical sigla often seems idiosyncratic, while the list of abbreviations seems a disorganized mess with several mistakes and the same letter used for several things. Add to this the fact that Follingstad goes against most other reference works and therefore does tie a student tightly to this particular novel approach.

I wish that such major dissertations could be downloaded in PDF-format from the Internet in order to reduce costs further and allow for searches in Acrobat Reader. I would hope at least that Follingstad would write an introductory textbook of reasonable size right away and at the same time pursue his fruitful research within the framework of cognitive grammar. My wildest dream is that translators and scholars will have access to his solutions in a program or as an add-on to some of the wonderful linguistic software that SIL is developing. At least this should be one of the aims of future work of similar size. Meanwhile Follingstad will do just fine and let us hope that many more SIL scholars will make such contributions to OT linguistics.

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Archaeology of the Land of the Bible. Vol. 2: The Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian Periods, 732–332 BCE. By Ephraim Stern. New York: Doubleday, 2001, 665 pp., \$45.00.

Ephraim Stern's work comprises the second volume of *Archaeology of the Land of the Bible* in the Anchor Bible Reference Library series. The first installment, written by Amihai Mazar in 1990, covered the materials from 10,000 to 586 BCE. Stern's volume overlaps slightly with Mazar's and covers materials from 732 to 332 BCE.

Some differences between Stern's and Mazar's volumes may be noted. Stern deals with a relatively short historical period (400 years) and is thus able to treat the finds more comprehensively than Mazar, who deals with everything from prehistory to Iron Age IIC. Since Mazar covers introductory matters and definitions such as geography, the tell, history of research, stratigraphy, excavation methods, etc., Stern is able to assume and exclude such discussions. While Mazar supplies endnotes for each chapter, Stern excludes them altogether. Instead, Stern furnishes the student with an extensive bibliography (45 pages) that is organized into helpful subdivisions for each period. One methodological difference between the two works concerns each one's dependence on and interaction with textual sources. Mazar's periods and chapter divisions are generally demarcated by evidence from the material culture, whereas Stern's divisions are based almost exclusively on the textual evidence (from Mesopotamian and biblical sources), because there is a great deal of continuity in the material culture. This contrast is of course unavoidable, due to the paucity of textual data from the earlier periods and the plethora of texts from the later periods. As a result, Stern is able to deal extensively with the convergences and interrelationships between the textual, archaeological, and geographical data.

Stern's volume is organized into three "books": Book One ("The Assyrian Period," 732–604 BCE), Book Two ("The Babylonian Period," 604–539 BCE), and Book Three ("The Persian Period," 539–332 BCE). The relative lengths of each "book" (297 pp., 47 pp., 229 pp. respectively) are representative of the extant materials for each period.

The strengths of Stern's book are immediately evident. First, the maps are excellent. They are more aesthetically pleasing than those contained in Mazar's text. Stern's maps of the excavated sites for each period (Late Iron Age: I.23,54; Babylonian period: II.1; Persian period: III.6) are especially helpful and up to date. Second, Stern gives a great deal of attention to matters of art and iconography such as glyptic, figurines, cult objects, jewelry, coinage. This emphasis in the book is most welcome and commendable. Third, the comprehensive bibliography—although it is not arranged alphabetically—is arranged into helpful categories and is up to date through 1998.

Some minor shortcomings of the book must also be noted. First, the illustrations could be improved and their number increased. The book features a total of 191 illustrations (compare Mazar's volume with 278 illustrations): Book One contains 120 illustrations, Book Three contains 64, but Book Two contains only seven. Some of the photographs are not in focus (e.g. I.45, I.114). While some of the illustrations are not discussed in the text (e.g. I.26–28), other important artifacts are discussed in the text but never illustrated (e.g. the *lmlk* impressions, pp. 174–75). Furthermore, it would serve the reader well if the illustrations were cross referenced in the text itself. Second, the English style of the book could be improved. In some places it reads more like a translation from Modern Hebrew than as a work that was originally executed in English. The text also tends to be repetitive and to overuse idiomatic phrases.

Nevertheless, Stern's textbook fills a curricular void that has been apparent for a long time, and his expertise—especially in the Babylonian and Persian periods—surpasses that of all other scholars. This text will no doubt be utilized in classrooms for decades to come.

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The Elders of the City: A Study of the Elders-Laws in Deuteronomy. By Timothy M. Willis. SBLMS 55. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001, 353 pp., \$49.95.

In this important study, Willis examines five laws in Deuteronomy that describe or mandate the participation of city elders in community life. In the view of many earlier critics, the presence of elders in some laws in Deuteronomy demonstrated the progression of judicial practice from a system based on local elders to one based, after centralization, on a professional judiciary. In such reconstructions, the legal function of the elder was supplanted by the judge, and the two offices were, therefore, mutually exclusive. Willis argues that the two offices were, in fact, complementary.

The major contribution of this study lies in its careful and extensive use of comparative ethnographic evidence. In each chapter, Willis describes the way in which the issues raised by the law in question are dealt with by city elders in contemporary African and Middle Eastern kinship-based communities. He proceeds to analyze relevant data from the ancient Near East. Having identified the role and function of the elders in similar settings, Willis then examines the law in Deuteronomy to identify how the elders are presented.

Willis argues that, as in both contemporary and ancient kinship-based societies, city elders in Deuteronomy are primarily concerned with the "reconciliation of a social rift, motivated by two primary considerations: the moral integrity of their community (which ultimately means its relationship with Yahweh), and the social/economic solidarity of their community" (p. 307). Moreover, he demonstrates that city elders function

primarily at the local level. A situation that extends beyond the boundaries of their community requires the participation of other functionaries (e.g. judges, priests). Thus, the roles of judge (for example) and elder are complementary.

Following an introduction to the methodology, terminology, and assumptions of the study, Willis presents an analysis of the judicial system of the Deuteronomic Code. Based on comparative evidence, Willis concludes that rather than being the result of a multiplicity of sources and layers, the legal code in Deuteronomy can plausibly be read as presenting a “redactionally unified judicial system from a single time period” (p. 82). Conclusions to the contrary, he argues, are based in large measure on presuppositions as to the development of judicial offices in ancient Israel.

He then examines each of the five elders-laws in turn. In the law regarding asylum (Deut 19:1–13), elders establish the nature of the killing and seek to restore peace to the community by persuading families of both perpetrator and victim that the solution (either exile to the asylum city if accidental or execution if deliberate) is just and in the best interests of the community as a whole. In the case of an unsolved murder (Deut 21:1–9), there is nothing to adjudicate, so elders serve primarily as representatives of their cities. Judges serve as mediators between equal groups of city elders, while priests serve as witnesses. In the law of the rebellious son (Deut 21:18–21), Willis argues that the purpose of the law is *not* to restrict the authority of the *paterfamilias* in favor of the state, but rather seeks to highlight the importance of loyalty to parents to the entire community (which in the final form includes the nation as a whole). Thus elders serve to uphold the moral integrity of the community. In the law of the accused bride (Deut 22:13–21), elders serve to highlight the importance of the welfare of the community as a whole, stressing that concern for the community as a whole must supersede personal interests. Willis sees no evidence in this law of an attempt by a central authority to downplay the role of the community. Finally, the law of Levirate marriage is analyzed, and Willis concludes that elders here serve as witnesses to the abrogation of the rights of the brother-in-law to a share of his deceased brother’s property, and to (ideally) convince him to fulfill his duty to his family by consenting to the levirate marriage. He further maintains that this law represents a peculiar set of circumstances, and therefore need not be seen as being on a developmental continuum with Genesis 38 and Ruth 4.

Not everyone, of course, will agree with all of Willis’s conclusions. But this work is a welcome contribution to the study of the role of elders in Deuteronomy, as it demonstrates that a synchronic reading of the texts is plausible and, in the light of comparative data, even probable.

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Character and Ideology in the Book of Esther. By Michael V. Fox. 2d ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, x + 333 pp., \$26.00 paper. *The JPS Bible Commentary: Esther.* By Adele Berlin. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2001, lix + 110 pp., \$34.95.

Fox’s book first appeared in 1991 (University of South Carolina Press) and has taken a distinguished place in all subsequent studies of Esther. This second edition of his work is a reprint with the addition of a postscript describing and interacting with works subsequently published. The bibliography and indexes appear to be unchanged from the first edition.

Character and Ideology is a distinctive work because it not only offers a brief but substantial commentary on the text of Esther, but also chapters discussing genre, liter-

ary structure, and each of the characters of the story in depth (Vashti, Xerxes, Haman, Mordecai, Esther, the Jews, God, and the world). For those interested in the literary development and recontextualization of the study throughout history, the volume offers a succinct discussion of character and ideology as reflected in the three extant versions of Esther: the Hebrew and two Greek versions.

I have found Fox's nuanced discussion of the author's deliberate absencing of God in the story and the message of that silence particularly thought-provoking. As he says in his response to Levenson's argument that God is to be understood as implicitly present, "The author's silences too must be interpreted. In my view they leave us with a *maybe*—a 'maybe' that demands an even bolder faith than plain statement would" (*italics his*, p. 290).

Readers will also benefit from pondering the "incongruous" humor and irony of Esther that Fox highlights. Genocide is no laughing matter, and many readers of Esther have therefore been uncomfortable with appreciating its humor. Fox's explanation of the function of humor in the story from a Jewish perspective gives us permission to appreciate it. "Humor, especially the humor of ridicule, is a device for defusing fear. The author teaches us to make fun of the very forces that once threatened—and will again threaten—our existence, and thereby makes us recognize their triviality as well as their power. 'If I laugh at any mortal thing,' said Byron, 'tis that I may not weep.' Jews have learned that kind of laughter. The book of Esther begins a tradition of Jewish humor" (p. 253).

Fox's work continues to be a must-read for all serious students of Esther. His ability to handle historical, textual, and literary issues with both scholarly depth and theological sensitivity bears fruit that will benefit Jewish and Christian readers alike. Erdmann has done well to assure that this fine work will continue to be available.

If Fox has given readers permission to see the humor in the Esther story, Berlin goes so far as to identify the genre of Esther as burlesque, making it "a comic story for a carnivalesque holiday" (p. xvi). In Berlin's view, Esther is imaginative storytelling that "historicizes" the Jewishness of Purim, although she sees no authentically historical material in the Esther story. The second distinctive characteristic of the commentary is its presentation of points of similarity between Esther and the Greek writers of the Persian period. Interesting material from rabbinic interpretation and the Targums also enriches the commentary.

Berlin's commentary is in a series that primarily serves Jewish laity. It includes the traditional Hebrew text with the new JPS English translation in columns at the top of each page. The extensive and well-written introduction to the commentary includes sections explaining Berlin's view of Esther as comedy, the narrative artistry of the story, the influence of Greek storytelling, the Greek versions of Esther, and Esther and other biblical women. Berlin provides a brief summary at the beginning of each chapter, but the commentary material itself is a treatment of selected phrases from the text. She presents many interesting and enlightening details from the Greek writers and rabbinic interpreters. For instance, her discovery that the Greek emissaries were loath to bow before Xerxes provides helpful background when interpreting Mordecai's refusal to bow before Haman (p. 35).

One disappointment with Berlin's commentary is the lack of discussion of the theological significance of the book of Esther. Her claim that "the message of the book of Esther and the significance of Purim remain the same whether or not the events of the book were actual" (p. xvii) deserves deeper reflection, because Esther is not only literature but also Scripture. Because the significance of the Esther story has been understood for centuries to arise from some historical event whose remembrance is theologically significant, whatever the value of a story that is made up out of whole cloth may be, it must necessarily be of a different kind. Berlin's reflections on that value

would be a welcome contribution to biblical scholarship that increasingly emphasizes “story” over “event,” yet claims it makes no theological difference.

All who work in OT studies should become familiar with these books from two fine scholars of our day, for each holds a distinguished place in Esther studies.

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Isaiah: A Commentary. By Brevard S. Childs. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001, 555 pp., \$59.99. *Isaiah 1–39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* By Joseph Blenkinsopp. New York: Doubleday, 2000, 524 pp., \$50.00. *Idem, Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* AB 19A. New York: Doubleday, 2001, 411 pp., \$45.00.

For the past 30 or 40 years, there has been a steady stream of commentaries on the book of Isaiah. In the past two years, however, there has been a sudden burst of commentaries: J. Blenkinsopp (2000–2002); W. A. M. Beuken (2000); K. Baltzer (2001); B. S. Childs (2001); J. Goldingay (2001); L. L. Walter and L. Walker (2002). This review examines the commentaries by Childs and Blenkinsopp. While they differ significantly in hermeneutics and perspectives on the book of Isaiah, in some ways they are quite similar: (1) they both have extensive bibliographies (even within each section) covering major works in German, French, and English; and (2) they have similar pre-suppositions as to how the text of Isaiah has developed, i.e. a core of Isaianic material was redacted and shaped into its present-day form. Childs emphasizes the final form of the text more than Blenkinsopp, but they both see the development of the text quite similarly.

For the past fifty years the primary emphasis on scholarship has been to dissect the various parts of the book of Isaiah into smaller and smaller units. It has only been in recent decades, after the seminal article by R. E. Clements entitled “The Unity of the Book of Isaiah” (*Int* 36 [1982] 117–29), that the final form of the book of Isaiah is being given attention once again (see Childs, pp. 1–5, 8–9, 16, etc.). Childs’s understanding of canonical criticism, which puts the emphasis on the final form of the biblical text, is a corrective that has been needed for decades. However, his commentary is weighted toward the history of interpretation rather than on providing new direction for Isaianic studies. Childs concisely states his overall method as follows: “in my opinion, it is fully inadequate to find the unity of this book in a succession of redactional layers, each with its own agenda, which are never ultimately heard in concert as a whole. . . . In the end, it is the canonical text that is authoritative, not the process, nor the self-understanding of the interpreter” (p. 4). My only wish is that Childs would have further developed this concept throughout his commentary.

Childs is known for his thoroughness of research and his ability to succinctly analyze various positions, a great strength in this commentary. For anyone interested in the history of interpretation for the book of Isaiah in the past 20 years, Childs’s commentary is a must-read. He spends little time, however, analyzing the various views or positions and often discounts other theories, including even some of his own older theories (e.g. pp. 233, 263, 264), with only a brief comment (e.g. pp. 8, 21, 29).

While Childs’s overview of the history of Isaianic interpretation is this commentary’s strength, it also contributes to its weakness in leaving little room for his own interpretation of the book. Perhaps there would have been more room for comment on textual issues if the commentary series had not chosen to include a retranslation of the

book of Isaiah (taking more than one-quarter of the book's 547 pages), especially since new translations of the Bible have been appearing almost yearly. Childs's textual notes are so pared down that they give little of his rationale for choosing one reading over another (e.g. "b. The NEB emends the MT to read 'wine'" [p. 193]; "d. The Hebrew text has been slightly emended (cf. BHS)" [p. 193]; "f. The exact meaning of *b^erît 'ām* is contested. The MT is often emended to 'let roar' (*vir'ām*) for the sake of coherence" [p. 315]). Even a brief comparison of Childs's notes with J. N. Oswalt's or J. D. W. Watts's indicates the weakness of his textual work. Childs has done such ground-breaking work in his book on OT theology, and yet, while his critique is informative, his commentary rarely goes into the type of detail necessary to critically evaluate the positions. Deeper discussion of the biblical text and a more thorough explanation of how the text fits together would be most welcome.

Childs appears to understand Isaiah 7, 9, and 11 as having been shaped to refer to a messiah, but it is surprising that he interprets the "suffering servant" in 52:13–53:12 as the prophet (probably "second" Isaiah). However, he does draw an ontological connection between the "suffering servant" in Isa 52:13–53:12 and Jesus. Childs explains it this way: "It is significant to observe that in Acts 8, when the eunuch asked about the identity of the Isaianic servant, Philip did not simply identify him with Jesus of Nazareth. Rather, beginning with the scriptures, 'he preached to him the good news of Jesus.' The suffering servant retains its theological significance within the Christian canon because it is inextricably linked in substance with the gospel of Jesus Christ" (p. 423). In some sense this is an attempt to bridge the gap between conservative scholars who see this as referring to Jesus and those who see it as someone else. The reader can be the judge as to whether this is an adequate interpretation of the passage, but at the very least Childs has seriously attempted to deal with the NT's use of this passage.

Blenkinsopp has gone beyond restating other scholars' views and has thorough textual notes on the Hebrew text. He demonstrates a knowledgeable handling of the Qumran manuscripts and the versions (Septuagint and Vulgate), although at times he is prone to putting too much weight upon Hebrew meter (e.g. pp. 252, 276). Another strength of this commentary is the historical sections, such as in chaps. 7, 10, 13–23, 36–39, and especially the beginning of his second volume. These in-depth historical discussions often provide information crucial to developing a more well-rounded understanding of these passages. His discussion of introductory matters for chaps. 40–55 appearing in the introduction to the second volume is the most thorough that I have seen.

Despite the number of new Bible translations today, this series, too, dedicates significant space to a retranslation of Isaiah—in this case it is included twice, a seemingly unnecessary repetition. Unlike several other Anchor Bible commentaries (see especially II Kings, Malachi), there is an unfortunate lack of maps and pictures to illustrate the text, something that had been a real strength in several of the series' volumes. The first volume has three excellent maps, one of which shows Sennacherib's campaign in 701 BCE (p. 465); the second volume has none.

Blenkinsopp, in contrast to Childs, does not see Isaiah 7, 9, and 11 as messianic; even Isa 52:13–53:12 is said to refer to the prophet whom Blenkinsopp understands to have suffered for the nation. Blenkinsopp also gives little weight to the recurring phrases "the former things" and "the things to come" in chaps. 40–48, which at least suggest some relationship to chaps. 1–39, whereas Childs gives them much greater attention. Blenkinsopp also makes two theologically irresponsible statements about God: (1) God sometimes has to be roused out of his sleep (certainly not the intended meaning of Ps 44:24), even though he admits that it contradicts Ps 121:24, which says that God does not slumber or sleep (2.332); (2) God at times forgets but prayers activate his memory (again not what Isa 49:14 is saying; 2.332).

Even if the reader does not fully agree with the author's conclusions, Blenkinsopp's discussion of the text is stimulating, and his hope, as stated in the preface, to write a commentary that would mediate between the expectations of scholars and those of the non-specialist, is a task he has admirably achieved.

Both commentaries demonstrate well the direction that Isaianic studies have taken, and both have attempted to explain some of the most difficult passages in the Bible with varying degrees of success. Childs's method seems to hold great promise, but is not used to its greatest advantage in this commentary. Blenkinsopp's textual notes and historical sections are extremely helpful, but his methodology seems to be weaker. I would rate Childs's commentary about a three stars out of five and Blenkinsopp's about three and a half. There is still a long way to go before we truly understand the intricacies of Isaiah's message.

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Micah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary. By Francis I. Andersen and David Noel Freedman. AB 24E. New York: Doubleday, 2000, xxv + 637 pp., \$42.50.

As twice previously (Hosea in 1980 and Amos in 1989), F. I. Andersen and D. N. Freedman have co-authored an Anchor Bible commentary on a Minor Prophet, this time Micah. As we have come to expect, the work is meticulous and extremely detailed, making it indispensable for scholarly work, but possibly a daunting text for students and pastors.

There are a number of attractive and useful features that distinguish this volume. Though the overall enumeration of texts and translations (pp. 3–5) is not as helpful as that in Waltke's Micah commentary (on pp. 595–97 in B. Waltke, "Micah," in T. E. McComiskey, ed., *The Minor Prophets: An Exegetical and Expository Commentary* [Baker, 1993]), Andersen and Freedman's focus on the LXX makes a wealth of information and analysis available to the reader. Beyond discussing textual differences between the MT and LXX, the authors consider the use of the LXX as an interpretive commentary and even provide a translation of the Greek for each passage to compare with that based on the Hebrew. The places where the LXX differs significantly from the MT are indicated so that they will stand out. Where else will a non-specialist readily be able to access this data? The translations of each passage from the Hebrew tend to be quite literal. Distinctions in the Hebrew, such as the use of the second person singular ("thou") instead of the plural ("you"), or gender (with [m.] or [f.]), are made plain in the English translation.

The authors discuss the differing canonical orders found in the Latter Prophets and in the Book of the Twelve (pp. 6–7; cf. p. 105). In treating the literary units of the book (pp. 7–14), Andersen and Freedman adopt the oft-cited outline for the book of chaps. 1–3/4–5/6–7. Chapters 4–5 are explained as the Book of Visions, which appears between doom and positive hope, on the analogy of Amos. There are difficulties in understanding the structural coherence of the book in this way, however. Such a division of the sections does not deal with the placement of 2:12–13 in the final form of the text (which is acknowledged, p. 10), ignores the clear answer 4:1–8 offers for the concerns of chap. 3 and the logical connection between sections that results, as well as the fourfold placement of promises to the remnant. There is also consideration of the *parashiyyoth* divisions in the text and their implications for interpretation of the structure (pp. 14–16, though these seem to occur mostly at obvious breaks in the text; in other instances they

leave one wondering why this break occurred where it does rather than with any new insight).

Under "The Organization of the Book of Micah," the authors commendably want to confine their remarks to "a few descriptive observations about the text we now have. . . . Where it came from and how it got to be that way are problems for which no solution is in sight" (p. 17). At this juncture Andersen and Freedman survey the history of prior research. They agree with Wolff's second stage in the formation of the book, in which comments were added to the original sayings of Micah in the neo-Babylonian era, and suggest that the book's final revision is linked with the assembling of the Book of the Twelve, no later than during the fifth century BC, possibly under Ezra (p. 20).

In the view of the authors, the more recent synthetic approaches to a whole book are better, since they examine the final form of the text as we have it, the one thing that "can be a given object of study, common to us all." The contributions of redaction criticism and especially the search for concentric structures are considered. Such research is commended for paying "more attention to the indications that somehow it all hangs together," but attempts to fit everything into rigid patterns can reach a point where the arguments are "stretched and strained, and the results lose credibility" (pp. 21–23).

The analysis of the structure and integration of the book is insightful (pp. 7, 27–29). Andersen and Freedman point out the inclusions that begin and end each section, as well as the whole book. They discuss the signs of an overall integration of the whole book—seen in the themes and structures that arise out of the programmatic opening statement in chap. 1, or that are resolved in the climactic closing statements in 7:18–20.

The bibliography is extensive (pp. 33–99), and ranges beyond Micah studies to include much that is broadly relevant to the scope of topics discussed. The commentary on the text extends over pp. 103–601. Significantly more space is devoted to chap. 1 than the other 6 chapters (150 pp. by itself) and to the first section of the book (chaps. 1–3 receive 289 pages, while chaps 4–5 have only 108 and chaps. 6–7 just 101).

This commentary has tremendous strengths. The analysis and availability of data from the LXX is unique. The study of the text of the book is carried out in painstaking detail. Few stones are left unturned. Sometimes it may feel to the reader that this is too much! (See pp. 136–45 to get a sense for the depth with which topics, in this case the structure of 1:2–7, are examined.) It is refreshing to see a treatment of the text that is open to and interacts with holistic, synthetic approaches to the book.

I also commend the agnostic stance adopted regarding the development of the book. The authors remain skeptical of claims that seem to go too far beyond the evidence and analyze the limits of what can be claimed based on the data (e.g. in their treatment of the work of Shaw: C. Shaw, *The Speeches of Micah: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis* [JSOTSup 145; Sheffield: JSOT, 1993], on pp. 24–27, 104). They struggle to reconstruct the historical background (e.g. pp. 7–14). Yet they still outline a modest reconstruction of the development of the book. They suggest that 2:12–13 and 4:10, "which anticipate exile to Babylon and subsequent return," might have been incorporated into the book after or during the exile. However, the authors balance this by being "open to the possibility that Babylon was part of the prophets' world map even in the eighth century" (p. 11). Andersen and Freedman hold a view of prophecy that admits the possibility that Micah was in error. Regarding 5:4–5, they assert that Micah expected an Assyrian invasion, which, of course, did occur. Thereupon a new Davidic ruler would defeat the forces of occupation, and then conquer Assyria and beyond. If "5:1–5 is an eighth-century prophecy that the outcome of menacing Assyrian imperialism would be the fresh creation of David's empire, then it was not fulfilled. Israel never conquered Assyria" and the prophecy would be reinterpreted as a reference to the end time (p. 481; cf. p. 11).

Plausible explanations are offered for why certain features of the text are as they are, such as the treatment of the lack of situation-stories in the text of Micah, which

would provide evidence for the early recording of Micah's oracles. Evidently the audience did not need these historical specifications to make sense of the oracle, because they shared the circumstances that the oracle addressed. In subsequent years, the oracles of Micah were evidently written down soon, since no situation-stories that explain the background were reserved. Only if the oracles had been put into written form much later would those stories have been added to explain the setting to a generation that would not have known (cf. pp. 105–6). The authors are critical in their evaluation of much traditional historical-critical scholarship on the prophets (e.g. pp. 106–7). It is excellent that Andersen and Freedman make use of much of the recent work done on Micah using synthetic, holistic approaches to the text. I only would wish that they had provided even more comprehensive interaction with the new and creative work being done from these perspectives. Their caution in drawing applications for today is commendable (p. 107).

The book reflects years of labor and thought. It is an indication of the magnitude of the shifts taking place in the study of the prophets as well. We can be grateful for Andersen and Freedman's investment of significant time to engage and elucidate the text of Micah.

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Introducing the New Testament: Its Literature and Theology. By Paul J. Achtemeier, Joel B. Green, and Marianne Meye Thompson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001, xii + 624 pp., \$35.00. *Introducing the New Testament.* By John Drane. 2d ed. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001, 480 pp., \$29.00.

These two books, both of which come from the left wing of the evangelical movement, introduce the beginning student to the content, background, and theology of the NT, all in one volume. The NT introduction by Achtemeier, Green, and Thompson is written at a level that would make it an excellent seminary text. It covers each of the NT books in their biblical order, starting with Matthew and ending with Revelation. The 25 chapters begin with a discussion of what the NT is (chap. 1), the world of the NT (chap. 2), and the nature of the Gospels (chap. 3). After separate chapters on each of the four Gospels, the authors include a chapter on Jesus of Nazareth (chap. 8). After the chapter on Acts, there is a discussion of letters in the NT (chap. 10) and Paul and his world (chap. 11). Finally, after the discussion of Revelation, there is a concluding chapter on the formation of the NT canon (chap. 25). Most of the chapters are about 20 pages long, ideal for a single assignment. This allows the instructor to have students read the NT books themselves and do further reading and research on specific topics. As anyone familiar with Joel Green's commentary on Luke might expect, the book is devoted heavily to an in-depth discussion of the actual content of each book, with far less attention paid to what has traditionally been seen as introductory matters (authorship, date, provenance, etc.).

The authors argue for some interesting positions. There is a careful use of sociological criticism, especially on the Gospels. "Audience" is used instead of "readership," most of the time convincingly. Unlike most such texts, this work enables the reader to be sensitive to reading the pericopae of the Synoptic Gospels on three levels—as they occurred in the life of Jesus, as they were used in the early Church, and as each author uses them in his writing (source, form, and redaction criticism). The authors insist strongly that the Gospel of Thomas is "of secondary value as a historical source because

of its date, its dependence on the Synoptic tradition, and its obviously Gnostic interpretation of Jesus" (p. 208); they thus directly counter the strong emphasis the Jesus Seminar gives to this document. There is a very nuanced defense of biblical miracles, especially the resurrection of Jesus (pp. 241–44). The wisdom and genius of Jesus as God's Son and his "world-transforming revolutionary mission" (p. 250) are presented in a most impressive way. Their treatment of Luke-Acts is quite original. Acts 1:8 is not "an outline of Acts" (p. 251), the "end of the earth" is "everywhere," and the purpose of Luke-Acts is ecclesiological (p. 266), not apologetic (the widely-held view that Luke tries to present Jesus and Paul to the Romans as innocent of any crime). Christianity was not a *religio illicita*; it was an illegal *collegium* (p. 286). 2 Thessalonians is "a letter written in Paul's name" (p. 280). "Romans may . . . be the last letter we have from the apostle Paul" (p. 301). Galatians 3:28 means that "all barriers to full religious participation based on race, sex, or social status within the body of Christ" are eliminated (p. 368). The authors support the "north Galatia" theory of the letter's destination (p. 374), though they see "no real significance" to this conclusion. Ephesians was not written to Ephesus, and the author depends heavily on what Paul wrote in Colossians (p. 380). Submission in Eph 5:21–22. "points not to domination and obedience, but to functioning properly within the good order of the family" (p. 387). If Paul wrote the prison letters, he probably wrote them from Ephesus, not Rome. Since 1 Timothy refers to women deacons, 1 Tim 2:9–14 refers to false teachers who deceived wealthy women who expected favored treatment in church (p. 450). "It doesn't matter if the author of the Pastorals is Paul or one of his disciples" (p. 461). 2 Timothy was written first, with "perhaps" a different author writing 1 Timothy and Titus. Though James was written by the Lord's brother, "a later collector or editor" could have made some additions (p. 498). Though Peter may have used Silvanus to write 1 Peter, an associate wrote 2 Peter in Peter's name after his death. No one expected "testamentary letters" to be by the person named (p. 529). "It is not certain" that the same author wrote all three Johannine letters (p. 536). The book concludes with a strong defense of a traditional view of canon formation.

For such a long book there are remarkably few typographical, grammatical, and conceptual errors, but I would rather focus on a few more serious statements in my criticism. How convincing is the suggestion that Matthew, Mark, and John are "lives," but Luke is "history"? Is it correct to say that there are "legends" in Heb 11:32–38? Would it not be confusing to a beginning seminary student to speak of "Deutero-Isaiah" (p. 216) and to assume a late date for Daniel (p. 564)? Yet these passing comments in the book should not hide from the professor who is looking for an outstanding NT survey the fact that this is a superb volume, although I have reservations concerning the idea of pseudonymity in the NT.

Drane's introductory volume has been around for more than fifteen years and is an excellent introduction to the NT for undergraduate classes. Though the title page says it is "completely revised and updated," there is no preface of any kind to the new edition, and therefore it is not easy to determine where it has been revised. A careful comparison with the 1986 edition, however, reveals some of the revisions. For example, the new edition mysteriously discusses Jesus' life, death, and resurrection (chaps. 2–5), then suddenly jumps back to a discussion of the kingdom of God, Jesus' parables, his miracles, and his ethical teaching (chaps. 6–9). The solution lies in the fact that the 1986 edition grouped chapters 2 to 5 in a Part 2 that has disappeared from the new edition. Chapters 6 to 9 were in a section called "The Kingdom Is Here," which has also disappeared in the new edition (as have the other six section headings!). Drane follows a much more topical approach. Chapter 10 discusses what a Gospel is, chapter 11 "Four Portraits of Jesus," and chapter 12 "Can We Trust the Gospels?" However, chapter 13 is devoted to Acts. Drane devotes nine chapters to Paul (introduction, the persecutor,

the letter writer, the missionary, the pastor, Paul's journey to Rome, and Paul's theology), with the various letters included under these headings. He includes the general letters and Revelation under the rubric "The Church and Its Jewish Origins" (chap. 23), though he comes back to Revelation in the next chapter on "the enemy within." The final chapter, which is new (both editions have 25 chaps., but the new edition combines chaps. 19 and 20 into a new chap. 19), gives an impassioned plea for the importance of recognizing the NT writings as Scripture for the believer. Drane strongly opposes the Enlightenment pretense to "objectivity" and the postmodern rejection of the idea of truth of any kind. In the new edition, Drane has thoroughly revised the wording of almost the whole book, though the headings and subheadings of chapters appear to have all remained the same.

These are two works of major importance and should be considered as texts for classes at the seminary and college level introducing students to the NT.

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Exploring the New Testament. Volume 1: The Gospels and Acts. By David Wenham and Steve Walton. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, xii + 302 pp., n.p.

It is probably as dangerous to review a book that surveys the NT as it is to write one, because when it comes to surveying the NT everyone does what is right in their own eyes. This book, in five parts, is designed for use in classes that survey the Gospels and Acts and concomitant issues. In addition, the book deals with the history that is reflected in the Gospels and Acts. The five parts are subdivided into thirteen chapters, and each chapter is further divided into subsections. This is useful to the teacher because one does not need to follow the outline as laid out in the book. Each chapter, after discussing its particular topic, concludes with suggested essay topics and a bibliography of relevant literature. Some of the chapters also have a section raising "issues for today" which might lead to good classroom discussion. Other features of the book include a few simple diagrams, maps, and charts, paragraphs entitled "What do you think?" or "Digging Deeper," numerous boxed paragraphs explaining technical jargon (e.g. midrash) or peripheral issues (e.g. some mystery religions). Sometimes the data is organized in a confusing way (pp. 17–19), but generally the book is clear and to the point. Survey books must constantly contend with the struggle between detail and breadth. This book does a good job for the undergraduate level. It is less satisfactory for graduate school or seminary level surveys where students need more depth and can handle a longer book.

At least two features detract from the usefulness of this text for the present reviewer. First, in the discussion of the historical Jesus (chap. 8), the Fourth Gospel is scarcely used. One might be led to wonder if John is as historical as the Synoptics, in spite of what is said elsewhere. Secondly, the book confuses text and event. When the authors note that, "To understand the NT we need to transport ourselves into the world of first-century Palestine and to see Jesus in his historical, social and religious context" (p. 3), they read modern ideas of reading history into the ancient context. For instance, I do not think we can assume that Mark intended his supposedly empire-wide audiences (p. 205) to understand even the Palestine of their day. It is true that to understand Jesus in his context one must grasp early Palestinian Judaism (p. 25), but understanding the historical Jesus and understanding later first-century Christian documents are not the same task. As the book notes later, "Narrative-critical approaches offer real

strengths, for they enable readers to focus on the text of the Gospels, rather than hypothetical reconstructions" (p. 88). One must discuss the Gospels as literature. But it is confusing to mix these tasks.

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Who is Jesus? History in Perfect Tense. By Leander E. Keck. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001, x + 207 pp., \$21.00 paper.

This is a paperback edition of the hard cover book published in the series "Studies on Personalities in the New Testament" by the University of South Carolina in 2000. The book, except for chapter 3, is a revision of lectures that the former president of the Society of Biblical Literature delivered at various times during the nineties. The title of the book suggests the intention of the author. By "history in the perfect tense," the author suggests his focus will be on the significance of Jesus for people today rather than on the details of historical analysis. What one finds instead is a helpful summary of the history and current status of historical Jesus research and then some thoughts on the significance of the Jesus derived from those studies. For Keck, the details of the history of Jesus are not critical to an assessment of his significance. The Gospels, for Keck, then, do not present a history of Jesus' life; they express Jesus' significance for the communities that produced the Gospels. Believers today are encouraged to find the meaning of Jesus' life and ministry for themselves. This posture toward the Gospels influences the significance that he finds in Jesus.

It is in the last three chapters that the author wrestles most directly with Jesus' significance. The first of these looks at Jesus' teaching and the significance of his preaching on the kingdom of God for today. As Jesus embodied that kingdom by obedience, so ought his followers. But the nature of that kingdom and even the nature of the obedience required is left unstated. The next chapter wrestles with the question of the significance of Jesus' death and resurrection. The significance of these events for Keck is that they have radically changed our conception of God. To be sure, Jesus' death and resurrection do change the Christian's view of God, but do they not have more significance than that? The last chapter discusses the significance of Jesus' moral teaching. He states accurately that Jesus' life and teaching give authorization for the believer today to live for his sake, but what is needed here is further definition of the life to be lived. Keck's discussion of that issue again leaves much unsaid. For the evangelical, then, the value of the book is in its summary of Jesus research and not so much in the conclusions it draws about Jesus' ongoing significance.

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The Rhetoric of the Gospel: Theological Artistry in the Gospels and Acts. By C. Clifton Black. St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2001, 224 pp., \$22.99.

C. Clifton Black has written a primer volume on a rhetorical reading of the Gospels and Acts. The book begins with a consideration of important rhetorical issues in the study of the NT, such as Greco-Roman rhetoric and NT textuality; the relationship

between literary and rhetorical analyses; the use of classical handbooks in NT rhetorical criticism; and the praxis of "reinvention" in the New Rhetoric.

The book is helpful to NT seminarians because it presents various ways in which one can read biblical texts rhetorically. For example, it gives a clear presentation of the narrative rhetoric of Matthew's characterization of faith (chap. 2). Using Kennedy's rhetorical method, Black reads Mark 13 as an example of "apocalyptic pastoral care" that seeks to heal "a distraught Christian community by revitalizing a vision [in] . . . heaven and earth under God's mysteries, faithful, restorative dominion" (p. 73). A style analysis of the Gospel of John (grand style) in comparison with 1 John (sublime style) is extended to the theological significance of the preached word in Church tradition. Chapter 5 looks at the character and role of John Mark in Acts and argues for John Mark as a literary "*ficelle* (a representative yet individualized character)" (p. 112), who has a limited vision on the missionary program. Chapters 6 and 7 survey the rhetorical form of early Christian sermons, especially the forms of a "word of encouragement" and a "parabolic homiletic." Chapter 8 concludes with three points: rhetorical study as a collection of lenses to the text; the polyvalence of the biblical text; and the theological nature of biblical artistry.

This book will serve as a good primer for those who wish to understand the current state and practices of a rhetorical reading of the Gospels. Black offers up-to-date material and at the same time brings his meticulous exegetical skills as well as a theological perspective to the NT hermeneutical task. This volume collects previously published materials, revising and expanding them so as to make a readable and impressive study of the "theological artistry" in the Gospels and Acts. While the book does not give a comprehensive rhetorical analysis of a particular book, it gives enough snapshots of the Gospels from different rhetorical perspectives that readers will be able to appreciate the historical, literary, exegetical, and theological persuasion of the NT texts.

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Turning to Jesus: The Sociology of Conversion in the Gospels. By Scot McKnight. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002, 214 pp., \$19.95.

Scot McKnight is on the cutting edge of the growing number of scholars in evangelical circles who are doing historical Jesus work. His previous work in the area (*A New Vision for Israel: The Teachings of Jesus in National Context* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999]) has been worthy of much study and has raised many new ideas to prominence in the historical Jesus debate. His current work is of an entirely different character. McKnight asks the question "What do we mean when we say that a person is converted?" He attempts to answer this question from both a biblical and sociological standpoint.

Lest some evangelicals worry about viewing conversion as a purely sociological phenomenon, McKnight cautions that he does not "think religion and conversion are simply social factors" (p. 175). He does, however, see value in viewing conversion through the sociological categories of conversion that come from such scholars as Lewis Rambo. These categories are not ends in themselves, but they are carefully sifted through the grid of conversion as it is presented in the NT.

McKnight has written this book, he says, because many of the "orientations to conversion in the evangelical, the Roman Catholic, and the mainline Protestant churches

force each person to “tell the same story” (p. ix). He means by this that the conversion experience that is accepted as the norm by a particular group is often foisted upon members of that group in spite of the fact that their particular experience may have been different. In the introduction, McKnight offers three major orientations to conversion: socialization, liturgical acts, and personal decisions. He argues that all three of these orientations are valid and potentially offer a genuine conversion experience. The problem, as McKnight sees it, is that one of these orientations (and which one depends upon what kind of church one attends) is taken and made normative at the expense of other kinds of conversion experiences. The problem which often occurs, argues McKnight, is that a convert with a different kind of experience is looked upon as quirky at best, if not lacking in a genuine conversion. McKnight sees his book as a “plea for understanding and appreciation” of different kinds of conversion experiences (p. 2). He is simply asking that Christians realize that the conversion story of another may not be exactly like their story, but that those stories that are different are no less valuable.

There are a number of very valuable points in this book. McKnight is a good writer, and his grasp of both the NT literature and good literature in general is well evidenced in his quotations (from Seneca to Flannery O'Connor). He illustrates many of the sociological and theological points about conversion through the use of actual conversion stories from his students and friends. These stories are a wonderful method for “putting skin on” the sometimes dry study of what conversion actually entails. All in all, this book is an excellent introduction to thinking about conversion from a wide rather than narrow perspective.

The work will not, however, be without its detractors. There may be a number of reasons for this, but I will point out one area in which McKnight could be misunderstood by those who do not read him carefully. McKnight is willing to argue that for some, conversion is a process of socialization and that “many have no comprehension of a time and date on which they *became* a Christian” (p. 5). There will be those who will argue that this indicates the lack of genuine conversion. Yet what McKnight is arguing falls in the tradition of the best of conservative theologians. Robert Reymond in his very conservative *New Systematic Theology of the Christian Faith* urges Christian parents to raise their children so that they never remember a day when they were not a convert of Jesus Christ. This does not mean that a conversion has not taken place, only that it is sociologically different from the “decisional conversion” or “walking the aisle” that many evangelicals have grown up with. McKnight is simply asking the Church to see the wide variety of experience in conversion to Christ and to appreciate and celebrate this variety.

While there are minor things that one could quibble about (e.g. endnotes instead of footnotes, lack of a bibliography), this is a very worthwhile book. It calls the reader to a fresh understanding of what it means to be a convert of Jesus Christ. In the end, McKnight does not ask that one give up his or her own conversion experience, only that one appreciate the conversion experience of others, different as it may be. Conversion is less about the time and place of the experience than it is about the person that is converted. As McKnight rightly points out, the main point is that “conversion is about following Jesus” (p. 181). For a deeper understanding of what this following means, both in one's own life and in the lives of those from different traditions, this book is a very worthwhile read. Highly recommended.

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Linguistics and Exegesis in the Gospel of Mark: Application of a Case Frame Analysis and Lexicon. By Paul L. Danove. JSNTSup 218. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, 248 pp., \$82.50.

Written by Professor Danove of Villanova University, this monograph is one of his many attempts to apply Constructional Grammar to the analysis of the NT text. The seven chapters of the book may be divided into two parts (chaps. 1–2, 7, and chaps. 3–6), which probably reflects more my understanding of its layout than that of the original author.

The first two chapters describe the methodology involved, Constructional Grammar, which is basically a further development of Case Theory, first theorized by the renowned American linguist Charles Fillmore in the 1960s. Different from classical transformational grammars which often assume an abstract deeper structure to an observable surface structure, Constructional Grammar (as representative of a nontransformational trend) accounts for linguistic relationships through the concrete, observable constituents of the sentences. “Constructional Grammar describes the grammar of a language in terms of grammatical constructions that identify a particular set of sentence elements and detail the syntactic and semantic constraints on these elements” (p. 16).

In his model, Danove employs three levels of analysis to Greek verbs (including a predicator such as εἰμι) and prepositions in the Gospel of Mark. Syntactic analysis describes the number of mandatory constituents (called “arguments”) and optional constituents (called “adjuncts”) required by a predicator. Semantic analysis describes the semantic roles (sometimes called thematic roles or semantic cases/functions) that “arguments play in representing the state of affairs designated by a predicator” (p. 21); accordingly, a set of 27 well-defined roles, with illustrations from the Marcan text, are utilized for this level of characterization (pp. 30–45). Lexical analysis describes how each constituent is realized lexically and is labeled according to traditional categories, such as N(oun and noun phrases), P(repositional phrases), A(dverb and adverbial phrases), and ADJ(ective and adjectival phrases). All these analyses are represented through a framework (called a Valence Description), which shows the attributes “of the possible arguments and adjuncts that can be placed in a dependency relationship to that predicator” (p. 20). Chapter 7 entitled “Lexicon and Parsing Guide” accumulates the results of all the analyses with classification. In essence, these 90 pages serve well as a reference to the semantic mapping of the predicator-argument relationship in the Gospel of Mark.

The second part (chaps. 3–6) demonstrates the application of such analysis to the Gospel of Mark. Chapter 6 addresses the general contributions of the lexicon and parsing guide. In particular, the author shows convincingly, however succinctly, the contribution of semantic case information in lexicography. In the remaining chapters, the author applies the data of the analysis to address a wide range of issues: textual critical questions and disputed points of punctuation (chap. 3), the translation of groups of verbs with particular syntactic and semantic properties (chap. 4), and the use of the method in narrative analysis, such as in the characterization of God (chap. 5).

Although the author has tried to use non-technical language to explain the concepts and strategies involved in his application of Construction Grammar, the non-specialist would certainly need more background information in order to appreciate the value of such multi-dimensional analyses, especially in comparison with traditional descriptions. For example, how would terms like “Agent” and “Patient” be different from “Subject” and “Object” or “Nominative” and “Accusative”? One wonders whether the author assumes some knowledge of such distinctions on the part of the readers. Notwithstand-

ing the potential problem in presentation, I am very convinced of the applicability of the method involved, although constraints of space do not permit a detailed evaluation of the application. For most biblical scholars, many of the applications offer a more precise and accurate description on the lexical and syntactic compatibility of certain linguistic strings. This is clear in his application on text-critical questions and on the issue of topicalization in narrative analysis. In other words, what the traditional scholars term as “style” is now measured by means of rigorous and falsifiable linguistic data.

As noted, doubtlessly what Danove has offered here would provide much insight into the linguistic functionality of verbs and related constructions, but for prepositions its value is not as obvious. Looking at prepositions such as ἀπό, εἰς, and ἐν, the linguistic description (pp. 216–18) offers little new from what traditional lexica (BAGD or BDAG) have already done. More troubling to me is the complex predicator, εἰμί (pp. 55–58, 222–36). Danove has noted well that εἰμί “is deemed to have no autonomous existence and, of itself, to require no arguments. . . . The resulting complex predicator” depends “on the number of arguments required by the non-verbal component” (p. 55). Accordingly, what is analyzed actually reflects the framing of the arguments, whether noun or adjective. Then why should this be included at all? In spite of the minor pitfalls, this monograph offers significant insight into contemporary biblical linguistic scholarship and is to be welcomed by those working in biblical studies.

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Miracle and Mission: The Authentication of Missionaries and Their Message in the Longer Ending of Mark. By James A. Kelhoffer. WUNT 112. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2000, xix + 530 pp., DM 128.00.

This volume, which had its origin as a University of Chicago dissertation, is a more comprehensive study of the Long Ending (LE) of Mark’s Gospel (i.e. 16:9–20) than the title and subtitle suggest. It does not, however, deal with any of the textual evidence or much of the internal evidence for and against the authenticity of the passage, although some of its conclusions could be looked upon as additional internal evidence against authenticity. It assumes that the passage was not originally part of Mark and then proceeds to deal with its origin and significance. Nor is it a conventional commentary on LE. Most of the passage is ignored.

Kelhoffer argues that LE is not a fragment of another, now lost Gospel but that it was deliberately composed in an attempt to provide a satisfactory ending for Mark. Indeed, he even suggests that without LE Mark might not have gotten into the NT canon! In order to complete Mark, LE’s composer was dependent upon actual copies of the four Gospels (including Mark 1:1–16:8) and Acts (only for v. 19) and not upon oral tradition or sources used by the Gospel writers. “LE’s author did not intend to create a novel account, but wrote in conscious imitation of traditions which he . . . esteemed” (p. 121). There are exhaustive lists of parallels on pp. 121–22 and 138–39. LE therefore is a deliberate forgery (pp. 150–54).

As for the date of LE, it must have been after the four Gospels were collected and became esteemed (not before ca. 110–120) but before they became canonical and therefore could not be significantly altered. Therefore LE must have been written ca. 120–150, i.e. before Justin (ca. 150), who, Kelhoffer is convinced, was the first to reveal a knowledge of LE. It is in fact the first witness to the collection of the four Gospels. I

must point out, however, that there is no hard evidence for a four Gospel collection until Tatian (ca. 170 when it was still possible to alter the Gospels) and Irenaeus in 180, who also are the first *certainly* to know LE.

Only in chap. 5 does Kelhoffer get around to what the reader expects from the title and subtitle. Chap. 5 deals generally with the place of miraculous signs to authenticate a missionary message. The last two chapters deal exhaustively with picking up serpents and drinking poison respectively, subjects which previously had not been thoroughly investigated. (There is no treatment of two other signs, exorcism and glossolalia in v. 17.) In these three chapters, the author scours the OT and NT, intertestamental literature, early Christian literature, rabbinic writings, and Greek and Roman literature for material that touches upon the relation of miracles to missionary activity. The mass of evidence he collects is a significant contribution. He gives special attention to LE's expectation that ordinary believers and not just church leaders will perform signs (paralleled only in John 14:12–14). In the epilogue, Kelhoffer suggests that LE is a striking example of Bart Ehrman's thesis that in the early centuries orthodox Christians often deliberately altered the text of the NT to make it more orthodox than it was originally!

There are a number of claims that need to be questioned, but Kelhoffer argues persuasively and for the most part has made his case. Certainly this is the most thorough and best study of LE to have been produced thus far.

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Johannine Sabbath Conflicts as Juridical Controversy. By Martin Asiedu-Peprah. WUNT 132. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001, 280 pp., \$63.00.

This book examines the two Johannine Sabbath conflict narratives in John 5:1–47 and 9:1–10:21 from a narrative-critical perspective and concludes that they are best understood not as a trial, but as a two-party juridical controversy as found in the OT. Intrigued by the Johannine Sabbath conflicts since his student days at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, Asiedu-Peprah later pursued this topic in his doctoral studies at the Australian Catholic University. His doctoral dissertation forms the basis for this present publication.

Asiedu-Peprah proves his thesis quite convincingly in six tightly-knit chapters. Chapter 1 presents the case for the “trial scenes” or the “lateral trial” position (involving an accused, an accuser, and a judge) of previous Johannine scholarship (A. E. Harvey, M. W. G. Stibbe). Even though lawsuit narratives have a literary and historical antecedent in the OT (Isa 1:2–3, Jer 2:2–37, Hos 2:4–25, Mic 6:1–8), the case for a lateral trial in John 5 and 9:1–10:21, according to Asiedu-Peprah, has inherent difficulties and inconsistencies. P. Bovati's recent interpretations of the OT *rib*-pattern, which argue for a two-party juridical controversy (involving an accusation, responses, and conclusion of the controversy), according to Asiedu-Peprah, fit the two Johannine Sabbath conflicts in John 5 and 9:1–10:21 better than the lateral trial.

Chapter 2 demonstrates how the two Sabbath conflicts relate to John's narrative. First, the *confrontational theme* in 2:18–20 occurs after initially verifying the *theme of faith* as the only appropriate human response to the words and deeds of Jesus (e.g. marriage at Cana: 2:1–11; prophetic temple act: 2:14–17; Nicodemus: 3:1–21; Samaritan woman: 4:1–42; official's son healed: 4:46–54). The confrontation motif progresses from

a simple conflict in 2:15–18 to a major juridical conflict in 5:1–47; 9:16. “The decisive factor which makes possible this progression,” according to Asiedu-Pepurah, “is the Sabbath motif (5:9b)” and “is therefore crucial for the correct understanding of the narrative in Jn 5:1–47” (p. 42).

John 5 formally introduces the legal bilateral juridical conflict between Jesus and “the Jews” over the Sabbath. Then it defines the role of “the Jews” at Jesus’ antagonists. Finally, it sets the conflict in motion with a deadly intent (p. 48), which continues in 9:1–10:21 but with no resolution over their legal differences of opinion. The importance of the Sabbath motif in the Fourth Gospel, according to Asiedu-Pepurah, is that it serves to heighten the emerging conflict within a specific legal and institutional framework of a two-party Sabbath juridical conflict. The unresolved conflict evident in 10:22–42 escalates into the formal forensic tri-lateral trial of Jesus before Pilate (18:28–19:16).

The heart and soul of the book are in chapters 3 and 4, since they provide an exegetical reading first for John 5 and then John 9:1–10:22. Asiedu-Pepurah demonstrates that in their form and content these two narratives correspond to the OT by-lateral juridical controversy. This controversy unfolds in the following stages: the event leading to controversy (5:1–9b), the accusation (5:9c–16), the additional accusations and intended sanction (5:18), and the response of the accused (5:17, 19–47). With the Sabbath controversy yet to be concluded, there is the resumption of the juridical controversy (9:1–10:21) and then the conclusion of the controversy (10:19–21).

Chapter 5 explains how and why the juridical controversy in John 5 and 9:1–10:21 persuades, shapes, and deepens the reader’s Christological understanding of Jesus. According to Asiedu-Pepurah, a “string rhetoric of persuasion,” is aimed at the reader to accept the Christological statements presented previously about Jesus in 1:1–18 and to convince the reader to make a faith commitment in Jesus. For instance, Jesus invokes three witnesses (John the Baptist, his own works, and Scripture: 5:31–40) to support his claim, whereas “the Jews” are less than successful with their witnesses (9:17–27). In the end, the witnesses of “the Jews” serve to distance the reader from their negative views, and then the text provides the reader with views from other characters that support Jesus’ identity and his soteriological significance. Asiedu-Pepurah uncovers similar rhetorical techniques associated with the juridical controversy that are employed to move the reader “to accept the Christological credo of the narrative and so come to faith in Jesus” (p. 211).

Chapter 6 presents the Christian community as one of many Jewish voices which sought to make themselves heard in the post-70 period and to bring some order to Judaism after the temple’s destruction. “There is no denying the fact,” says Asiedu-Pepurah, “that the tradition reflected in the Sabbath conflict narratives go back to the historical ministry of Jesus himself. . . . What the Fourth Gospel does is to take this tradition and give it the narrative shape of a juridical controversy in order to utilize the latter’s strong rhetoric of persuasion to convince the opponents of the Johannine Christians of their christological claims” (p. 227).

Asiedu-Pepurah’s meticulous presentation displays a sound interaction with the text. His defense of a two-party juridical controversy from a narrative-critical perspective, within the framework of *reader-response criticism*, is quite convincing. The new light he sheds on the meaning of the Sabbath conflicts in John 5:1–47 and 9:1–10:21 is a welcome contribution to Johannine scholarship.

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Paul on Trial: The Book of Acts as a Defense of Christianity. By John W. Mauck. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2001, xviii + 236 pp., \$14.99 paper.

John W. Mauck, a seasoned attorney, has written *Paul on Trial* to prove that the book of Acts is a pre-trial brief written by the “attorney” Luke to defend Paul, and consequently Christians in general, from the charge that he is introducing a new and illegal religion, which would come under proscription by Rome. Instead, Christianity is a Jewish sect, which is protected by Roman law, and the struggles of the apostle Paul are due to Jewish leaders who are acting in a hostile manner toward this messianic Jewish sect. The author believes, however, that Acts has an evangelistic thrust at various points, which seems at times to be incongruent with the purpose of a brief. In order to make his argument, Mauck attempts to present evidence of such pretrial briefs in ancient Rome and attendant Roman prosecutorial practices, including possibly the work of someone like Theophilus, to whom would be given the responsibility of evaluating arguments as to their merits before they were presented to the emperor. In order to set forth his pretrial brief thesis, the author then examines the book of Acts in order explaining how each of the accounts given by Luke contribute to this defense.

I immediately found this well-written treatise to be of interest since I have been a professor of law or theology for nearly thirty years. The thesis of Acts, at least in some manner, performing as Paul’s legal defense before the Roman court appealed to me. I am still convinced that aspects of Acts serve that purpose to some degree, but consider that Mauck has not made his case. This is so for a number of reasons, of which only a few will be given in this brief review: (1) Not in one instance can Mauck provide a legal brief of the Roman period to compare with Acts to see if the book fits the legal genre. He simply assumes that it fits the pattern of brief writing done by lawyers today. (2) He too conveniently solves all problems in Acts and fits every element of Acts into the alleged legal form. (3) His arguments that Theophilus is not a believer or even an inquirer of Christianity are unconvincing. Without any evidence whatsoever, he considers Theophilus a Roman official who evaluates legal cases before they are sent to the emperor. (4) Mauck does not adequately explain why Luke would send the massive Gospel of Luke to provide information about Jesus to this legal clerk of Nero. We are not talking about “brief” briefs. (5) He assumes that pagan Romans would be impressed with theological events and ideas and thinks that Nero would have read Luke and Acts. The idea that Nero would read two books which comprise more space in the NT than all of Paul’s epistles is fanciful. (6) He reads the present into the past—but even as a present-day brief Acts would be in an unacceptable brief form. (7) Mauck is very imaginative, so that *every item* of Acts, no matter how small, is made to serve the theory, though each is subject to another explanation. (8) Acts concerns the spread of the gospel beyond the Jews to the whole world so that Christianity is *not* just a Jewish sect. This defeats Mauck’s argument that Acts was written to show that Christianity is legal, since it was Jewish.

The book provides an innovative but unconvincing thesis. I believe, however, that the charts in the book give some helpful breakdowns of Paul’s various trials and defenses that would benefit the reader.

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Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology. By Thomas R. Schreiner. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 504 pp., \$24.99.

To understand and articulate the thought of Paul accurately, a scholar must have ample tolerance for creative tensions co-existing in the same mind and a genuine appreciation of the missiological character of his extant letters. Thomas Schreiner succeeds on both accounts and has produced a thorough and readable presentation of the apostle's foundational theological convictions. Schreiner departs from the consensus critical view of seven authentic Pauline letters and builds his theology of Paul from the entire thirteen letter Pauline corpus, drawing heavily on Colossians, Ephesians, and the Pastoral letters in the process. He affirms that Paul's "inconsistencies" flow out of faithful application of the gospel to situational issues that arise as he lives out his dual calling as pioneer church planter and pastor of newly formed congregations. This is a refreshing departure from trends in contemporary scholarship that view the apostle as confused and contradictory.

Schreiner finds the "center" of Paul's thought not in a soteriological metaphor like justification or reconciliation but in the magnification of God's glory in Christ through the gospel. This expansive center is much more satisfying than the common narrower proposals but is not framed in a clear and concise manner. A more helpful summary which moves in the same direction is Gordon Fee's proposal of a "cluster-center" (*God's Empowering Presence* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994] 11–13).

I found the best chapters of the book to be those that catalogued Paul's views of suffering (chap. 4), the person of the exalted Christ (chap. 7), and faith and hope as the ground of perseverance (chap. 11). Though at times Schreiner seems to allow his Reformed perspective to be superimposed on the text, he is overall a careful exegete who deals with all of the biblical evidence related to a particular motif. The pattern is to raise an issue, cite one or more interpretive alternatives to the problem, then in an irenic manner provide scriptural and logical evidence for his own view. Suffering is to Paul the means of spreading the gospel, of legitimating the integrity of his ministry, and of confirming the truthfulness of his proclamation of Christ. The post-Easter enthronement of Christ as Lord speaks of his pre-existence, deity (Yahweh of the OT is Jesus of the NT), and effective redemption of the world. In an excursus on universalism, Schreiner argues that the "all" and "world" passages mean all without distinction rather than all without exception. This is a rare example where he dismisses alternative solutions much too quickly. Perseverance is rightly seen as the bridge between present faith and future inheritance. One could compare with profit Schreiner's exegesis with the fuller treatment of many of the same texts by Judith Gundry Volf (in *Paul and Perseverance* [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1990]).

The author tackles each of the controversial texts in Paul with clarity though often without depth. The visit of Gal 2:1–10 is the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 (p. 51). To "fill up Christ's afflictions" (Col 1:24) is to extend through his own suffering the message of the all-sufficient death of Christ to the Gentiles (p. 102). The phrase "works of the law" refers to deeds or actions demanded by the Mosaic law in its entirety (p. 114). Here Schreiner dissents from the "new perspective" (E. P. Sanders, J. Dunn, *et al.*) that sees Paul's fight not with legalism but with Jewish ethnocentrism. It is unlikely that Paul would describe Christian believers by the language of Rom 7:13–25 (p. 132). Phil 2:6 is rendered correctly in the NRSV: "did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited" (p. 171). Righteousness in Rom 1:17, 3:21–22 is forensic rather than transformative (i.e. ethical), a reversal of earlier views expressed in his commentary on Romans (p. 208). Election involves the divine pre-temporal choosing of individuals to salvation along with the means of salvation, faith itself, as a divine gift to the individual

(pp. 240–47). Though the Church is the new “Israel of God” (Gal 6:16), there is still a future for ethnic Israel when the end-time generation of Jews comes to faith in Jesus Messiah near or at his personal return to earth (pp. 481–83). Here and in many places Schreiner is to be commended for allowing the tension in the biblical data to stand rather than opting for a precise theological system that distorts part of the evidence.

Schreiner’s is a broad-ranging work that can serve as an excellent introduction to the main lines of Pauline theology and their supporting data. As for exegetical detail and theological profundity, it cannot compare with the more extensive works of Herman Ridderbos (*Paul: An Outline of His Theology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975]) and James Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]), which will continue to stand at the forefront of Pauline theologies in the English language.

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Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective. By Peter Stuhlmacher. With an essay by Donald A. Hagner. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 108 pp., \$12.99 paper.

Just because something is new does not necessarily mean that it is good. In the field of biblical theology, those who propose a new perspective must defend the imposing claim that they have discovered a truth that has been hidden to all the great saints and theologians of the Church through the ages. Krister Stendahl, E. P. Sanders, and James D. G. Dunn make such a bold claim regarding their “new perspective” on Paul’s doctrine of justification. Most of the proponents of the new perspective affirm that (1) justification in Judaism was and is primarily in a context of grace (covenantal nomism) rather than legalism; (2) the emphasis on justification by faith arose not from Paul himself but from Martin Luther imposing his own struggle with the Catholic church on his interpretation of Paul; (3) the primary focus of Paul’s writings on justification is a polemic against Judaizers and a defense of his mission to the Gentiles, not a pattern for salvation; and (4) the Pauline concept of justification is best understood, not as justification by faith, but as a mystical encounter with Christ.

In *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective*, Peter Stuhlmacher and Donald Hagner refute the claims of the new perspective and defend the traditional doctrine of justification by faith. This volume arose in part as the fruit of a lecture series that Peter Stuhlmacher, professor emeritus at the University of Tübingen, delivered at Beeson Divinity School and Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Donald Hagner, George Eldon Ladd Professor of New Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary, also contributed an updated version of an essay published earlier in the *Bulletin for Biblical Research*. Hagner’s article is an excellent survey of the issues involved in the new perspective and may have been more appropriately placed as a preface rather than as a final chapter. Both authors provide a thorough review of the history of interpretation on this issue, and both buttress their case for the traditional view of justification with extensive references to about 400 biblical citations.

Stuhlmacher and Hagner affirm that the new perspective does make important contributions. They agree that the stereotypical view of a monolithic Judaism with salvation by works is one-sided; it is more accurately described as a synergism of divine grace and human effort. Obedience to the law was grounded in keeping the covenant with God’s gracious election of Israel. Stuhlmacher and Hagner acknowledge that Paul does

indeed defend his mission to the Gentiles and does discuss the “boundary markers” between Jew and Gentile in Jewish law.

Having acknowledged these valid insights, Stuhlmacher and Hagner present at least three lines of argument against the new perspective on justification. Their primary disagreement with the new perspective is not that it is entirely erroneous but that it is incomplete. It is reductionistic to claim that Paul’s defense of his Gentile mission exhausts *all* the meaning of Paul’s doctrine of justification. The authors assert that the NT language balances both forensic and mystical elements and does not simply present a one-sided emphasis on the doctrine of mystical identification with Christ. They also deny the claim that justification by faith is a subsidiary emphasis in Paul’s writings and that the apostle’s polemical struggles against the Judaizers in defense of his Gentile mission is Paul’s major emphasis. For Stuhlmacher and Hagner, the new perspective does not adequately account for the many biblical texts which appear to affirm justification by faith (Rom 2:1–29; 3:20, 28; 4:4–6; 5:20; 11:5–6; Gal 2:16; 3:10–14). In a thorough overview of biblical themes such as justification, atonement, the kingdom of God, and final judgment, Stuhlmacher presents a convincing case that the new perspective overlooks or downplays key biblical texts and doctrines.

Second, Stuhlmacher and Hagner deny that justification by faith can be dismissed as merely Martin Luther’s misreading of Paul in the light of his own circumstances. If *sola fide*, the foundation of the Protestant Reformation, was merely the obsession of a German monk who misunderstood the NT, evangelical Christians should acknowledge that the Protestant Reformation was misguided and apologize to the Council of Trent!

Third, Stuhlmacher and Hagner rightly point out that an overly optimistic anthropology is at the root of the new perspective on justification. James D. G. Dunn advocates the position that not only Jewish soteriology but also Pauline soteriology was characterized by covenantal nomism. Salvation requires God’s work *plus* human effort. In contrast to this more optimistic anthropology, however, Paul believed that humans were dominated by sin. In Paul’s perspective, neither Jew nor Gentile could achieve the high standards of the law. Faith in Christ was the only way to salvation for Jew and Gentile alike.

This book offers a helpful evangelical perspective on a critical issue in biblical theology. For those who have not studied this issue in depth, *Revisiting Paul’s Doctrine of Justification: A Challenge to the New Perspective* is a valuable and accessible introduction.

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Paul in Chains: Roman Imprisonment and the Letters of St. Paul. By Richard J. Cassidy. New York: Herder & Herder, 2001, xv + 317 pp., \$24.95. *Re-examining Paul’s Letters: The History of the Pauline Correspondence.* By Bo Reicke. Edited by David P. Moessner and Ingalisa Reicke. Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001, xii + 164 pp., \$20.00.

In *Paul in Chains*, Richard Cassidy, prolific author of earlier studies on the NT and politics (*Jesus, Politics, and Society: A Study of Luke’s Gospel*; *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles*; and *John’s Gospel in New Perspective: Christology and the Realities of Roman Power*), argues that Paul turned more critical of the Roman authorities between Romans and Philippians because of his imprisonment. In *Re-examining Paul’s*

Letters, Bo Reicke (author of the similarly trailblazing volume, *The Roots of the Synoptic Gospels*) offers an innovative, comprehensive chronology of all thirteen letters attributed to Paul.

The structure of Cassidy's study is complex (as he readily admits on p. 5). His analysis of Paul centers on Romans 13, Philemon, and Philippians (chaps. 3, 6, and 11). Chapters 4, 5, and 10 explore Roman imprisonment, Roman treatment of *maiestas* ("treason"; which Cassidy sees as the principal charge against Paul), and the clash between Nero's moral depravity and claims to sovereignty and Paul's ethics and proclamation of Jesus as the ultimate Lord. Chapters 7 (Colossians and Ephesians), 8 (2 Timothy), and the appendix (Acts) complete his secondary objective of analyzing all major NT passages pertaining to Paul's Roman imprisonment. The logic of Cassidy's thesis becomes fully evident only in chapter 12: Cassidy interprets Paul as a convinced apologist for Roman rule in Romans 13, but as a reflective critic, similar to Luke's Jesus, in Philippians. Cassidy finds plausible factors in Paul's imprisonment that impelled him to re-evaluate the Roman authorities. In particular, Paul, after facing the agonies of his own prolonged, unjust imprisonment, gained a clearer realization of Roman injustice in the crucifixion of Jesus and in his own imprisonment and possible execution and was confronted with a new awareness of the extent of Nero's moral depravity and assertions of sovereignty.

Part 1 of Reicke's volume contains two previously published essays that provide a more detailed sketch of Reicke's reconstruction of a growing "judaizing" of church politics in Jerusalem under rising pressure from their Jewish contemporaries (AD 54 to 66). The main body (Part 2, a planned lecture series completed just prior to his death in 1987) provides a scintillating reconstruction of the chronology of Paul's correspondence, skillfully weaving together the evidence of persons, events, and geography found in both Acts and all thirteen Pauline letters. The resultant chronology (cf. Appendix 1) is as follows: 2 Thessalonians (AD 52) and 1 Thessalonians (AD 52/53) during a period of early Palestinian Jewish-Jewish Christian tension; Galatians (AD 55), 1 Corinthians (AD 56), 1 Timothy (AD 56), 2 Corinthians (AD 57), Romans (AD 58), and Titus (AD 58) during a period of rising Zealotism; and Philemon (AD 59), Colossians (AD 59), Ephesians (AD 59), 2 Timothy (AD 60), and Philippians (AD 61/62) during Paul's imprisonment. Part 3 reprints three essays that flesh out Reicke's thesis concerning the chronology of the Pastoral Epistles, the historical improbability of a post-AD 61 date for Colossians, and the evidence for a Caesarean provenance for Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians and a distinct Roman provenance for Philippians.

The principal contribution of *Paul in Chains* lies in its vivid depiction of the conditions of Roman imprisonment (cf. *The Book of Acts and Paul in Roman Custody*), the episodes involving *maiestas* during Nero's reign, and the moral decadence of Nero's reign. The conditions of Roman rule constituted real-life considerations and experiences affecting Paul and his audience and enrich our understanding of the political and moral environment they faced. Future studies would do well to consider the social and political context of Roman rule in addition to the more customary concentration on Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds. Nevertheless, several aspects of Cassidy's interpretation of Romans 13 and Philippians rest on tenuous ground and cast considerable doubt on his main thesis (despite some illuminating analysis of these and other texts). First, not all interpreters agree that Paul requires absolute obedience to government leaders in Romans 13 (see e.g. the survey in Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996] 806–10). Second, since the governing authorities are said to be God's servants appointed by him, God is still implicitly the ultimate sovereign. In principle, it is possible that a conflict of authority could occur and that a Christian should obey God rather than a human authority. Third, Paul overstated his case for governing authorities if he only meant the largely benign Roman rule around the time of his writ-

ing of Romans—he uses universal language applicable to all governing authorities. He was surely not ignorant of human history, of how the ruling authorities had put Jesus to death, or of how much evil governments had inflicted on God's people (cf. the OT and Jewish tradition). With regard to Philippians, Cassidy's detection of direct criticisms and denunciations of Roman rule is often too subtle (see e.g. pp. 169–70 on Phil 1:27–30, pp. 175–77 on 3:20–4:1, and pp. 178–84 on 2:6–11). Furthermore, it is doubtful that Phil 3:17–4:1 decries Nero and his accomplices (see pp. 172–74).

Despite substantial similarities in dating to J. A. T. Robinson's *Redating the New Testament*, which has not won widespread assent (Robinson was significantly indebted to Reicke's then published essays [reprinted in the present volume]), *Re-examining Paul's Letters* adds important contributions. First, it gives an elegant demonstration that the names, events, and geography of all thirteen letters *could* be fitted into the period of AD 52–62 (whether or not the Pastorals really do belong here). Second, it proposes a more nuanced appreciation of Paul's literary activities over against reigning critical scholarship (thus exposing the weaknesses of stylistic and theological criteria erected against the disputed letters). Third, Reicke's reconstruction of the influence of Zealot pressure on the Jerusalem church and consequent constraints on missions to and fellowship with Gentiles presents a more credible alternative to more radical portraits of counter-missionary efforts from the Jerusalem apostles against Paul.

Both books under review advance provocative theses and exhibit considerable ingenuity in building their respective arguments. In the final analysis, however, Reicke's arguments rest on firmer evidence and should receive greater attention (though the reader will not be convinced by every argument, and the dating of the Pastorals is particularly tenuous).

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Reframing Paul: Conversations in Grace & Community. By Mark Strom. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2000, 255 pp., \$17.99 paper.

Mark Strom treats us to an insightful study of Paul and a provocative critique of contemporary evangelicalism, all in the space of 255 pages. Growing out of a doctoral dissertation at the University of Western Sydney, this book challenges evangelicalism to reframe its reading of Paul. Strom's first chapter should be carefully read as it clearly lays out the burden of the book: ". . . evangelicalism reflects both Paul and the Greco-Roman world. At our best, we faithfully portray the cutting edge of Paul's remarkable message. . . . At our worst, we have lost the radicalness of grace and freedom championed by Paul" (pp. 18–19).

Part one of the book contextualizes Paul's mission effort in the Greco-Roman world. Gleaning the fruits of study in the intellectual and social world of the NT, he deftly sketches the leading social realities of Greco-Roman life. Emphasis is placed on the actual, concrete realities of day-to-day living, such as the patronage system with its shame and honor, beneficence and gratitude nexus. Status is everything in such a system, and therefore maintenance of status a major preoccupation. It was precisely Paul's refusal to "play the status game" that made his message so radical. For Strom, the sad part is that evangelicals play their own version of the status game.

Strom's critique of evangelicalism hits home. Having served in the pastorate for over 10 years and in academia for 23, I second many of his criticisms. On the other hand, my own evaluation of evangelicalism is not quite so negative. I think the report card is better than he allows.

Furthermore, I am not always convinced that Strom's frame for reading Paul is precisely on target. Though he acknowledges several times Paul's indebtedness to Judaism, this plays little role in his reading of Paul. In particular, his claim that Paul's *ekklēsiai* were essentially non-religious associations, like Greco-Roman *ekklēsiai*, strikes me as odd. Surely the influence of the synagogue has not been adequately accounted for. The upshot is that on a few specific points I think he misses an important part of the frame.

Nonetheless, Strom is to be commended for a stimulating exercise in reframing Paul. I also appreciate his candor in relating his own personal journey of faith. That by itself was worth the price of the book. In all honesty, evangelicalism in North America will continue to conduct business as usual; I sincerely wish, however, we could seriously engage Strom's critique.

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Theology of the New Testament. By Georg Strecker. Edited and completed by Friedrich Wilhelm Horn and translated by M. Eugene Boring. New York/Berlin: Walter De Gruyter; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000, xvii + 758 pp., \$54.95 paper.

In Georg Strecker's 1975 essay entitled "Das Problem der Theologie des Neuen Testaments" (in a volume by the same title edited by Strecker), this noted University of Göttingen professor of NT sketched out the basic ideas of his treatment of NT theology. With a serious illness drawing his life to a close (he died at age 65 in 1994), Strecker asked F. W. Horn to take the largely completed—but still unfinished—work and to bring the project to completion for him. The German edition appeared in 1996, and four years later Strecker's long-time friend, M. Eugene Boring, translated the work into English.

Strecker's homage to Rudolf Bultmann is noticeable on page 1 (and elsewhere) in his definition of "theology." With reference to Plato's use of the word, Strecker remarks that "theology has to do with myths; to it is assigned the task of bringing out the deeper meaning of the stories about the gods. . . . Accordingly, theology has the goal of laying bare the structures on which the myth is based" (p. 1). Thus, regarding the theology of earliest Christianity, Strecker seeks to explain the structures of belief that brought forth the expressions of religious experience embodied in the NT documents. He does not presume to outline *the* theology of the NT, nor does he intend to trace a history of early Christian theology or practice from Jesus through the Palestinian believers, to the Hellenistic believers, to Paul, and to later Christian writers. Rather, Strecker's work takes a redaction-critical approach to the NT documents so as to find, developed over time (diachronically), a variety of NT *theologies* that can be arranged according to authorial distinctiveness (synchronically). While the history-of-religions school of thought clearly impacted him (e.g. see part A. I. entitled "History-of Religion Presuppositions—Prepauline Elements in Pauline Theology," pp. 19–78), Strecker is sometimes careful not to overstress the parallels he notes between early Christianity and other ancient faith systems. By and large, however, Strecker is often distracted so much by theories of redaction and the critical approach(es) of analyzing historical development that the message of the NT text as it stands takes second place. (See e.g. Strecker's insightful inquiries about the prologue of John reflecting theologically upon Gen 1:1, which he then immediately discounts, p. 473.)

Some evangelical readers may feel only minor discomfort over Strecker's history-of-religions presuppositions, but most will register immediate unease with Strecker's disregard for viewing the NT as God-inspired. "The unity of the Old and New Testaments,"

"The integrity of the biblical canon," and "The identity of biblical teaching and dogmatic theology" form Strecker's threefold summary of a pre-Enlightenment approach to biblical theology. He proposes that this volume "be understood as the history of the criticism and dissolution of the previous idea of a 'biblical theology'" (p. 5). In this he displays a naively simply (mis)understanding of the orthodox view of inspiration. Of course, many evangelicals have put forth similar, naively simple (mis)understandings, and Strecker's critical—albeit extreme—response is then no surprise. This may serve as a call for evangelicals to engage the issues with more sophistication.

Despite his general disregard for the NT as a canon of literature, on practical grounds Strecker limits his inquiry to the canonical documents, which he clearly sees "as a historically-conditioned construct that participates in all the relativities of history, including the phenomena involved in the history of literature" (p. 3). Thus, after his brief introduction on the terms "Theology of the New Testament" and "Biblical Theology" (8 pp.), Strecker's six-part layout begins with "A. Redemption and Liberation—The Theology of Paul" (208 pp.), progresses to "B. Early Christian Tradition to the Composition of the Gospels" (102 pp.) and "C. The Way of Jesus Christ—The Synoptic Gospels" (100 pp.) and "D. Truth and Love—The Johannine School" (128 pp.), and finishes with "E. On the Way to the Early Catholic Church—the Deuteropauline Literature" (58 pp.) and "F. A Message with a Universal Claim—The Catholic Letters" (78 pp.). The short general bibliography (pp. 683–85) is offset by the bibliographic suggestions found throughout the text at the beginning of each section and each subsection (and some sub-subsections!) of the extended outline. Ancient writings, subject, and author indexes round out the volume's 758 pages.

Strecker shares typical higher critical claims about the NT (e.g. the historical inaccuracy of Acts, the pseudepigraphical authorship of most of the NT documents, the contention that the historical Jesus cannot be the same as the Christ of faith). But such presuppositions are not without their blind spots. So, for example, with perhaps a tone of condescension, Strecker claims that Luke the historian is writing about Christian faith and therefore lacks honest (i.e. secular) objectivity (p. 396; see p. 401). Strecker seems to hold the falsely dichotomous beliefs that, "As proclaimed saving events, the cross and resurrection of Jesus demand faith from the hearer, not rational investigation" (p. 104) and that "Paul is not concerned . . . with Jesus' death as a historical fact but with the interpretation of the meaning of this death" (p. 105). He tries too hard to argue *for* the resurrection of Jesus *without* an empty tomb (pp. 107–9).

Nonetheless, Strecker is able to make several claims that sound evangelical. "The Christ-event to which the early Christian kerygma testifies is the decisive point of orientation from which the theological conception of the New Testament authors proceeds" (p. 8). With regard to the centrality of the death and resurrection of Jesus for Christianity, he says,

The meaning of the cross of Jesus is thus not to be grasped in any other way than from the perspective of the resurrection. The history of Jesus' passion and death remains as mere events of the past if they are not seen from the post-Easter point of view. The resurrection faith interprets the cross: the suffering one is the exalted Lord of the Church. The paradox of suffering and exaltation is the characteristic feature not only of the Christ who is believed in, but is just as much the mark of the community that believes in him (p. 274).

He notes that "according to New Testament understanding the Christ event is the turning point of history, that the word of the gospel calls for faith from every person without distinction of their national or religious background" (p. 209). Strecker's description of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith and not works is basically evangelical (see esp. pp. 152–53).

In the end, evangelical professors will be disappointed with this as a NT theology text, but it is a fine example of the more typically critical scholarship with which serious evangelical theologians must learn to dialogue more successfully.

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The Quest for Truth: Answering Life's Inescapable Questions. By F. Leroy Forlines. Nashville: Randall House, 2001, xxii + 544 pp., \$34.95.

Because the appearance of well-written, up-to-date, evangelical systematic theologies representing distinct traditions is relatively rare, the publication of Forlines's volume is highly significant. The work is a well-studied and well-argued defense of a non-Wesleyan Arminianism by the leading theologian of the Free Will Baptist Church. The author has greatly expanded and recrafted his earlier *Systematics* (Nashville: Randall House, 1975) into a new work. Though not indicated by the title, the book does function as a systematic or dogmatic theology except that the areas of pneumatology, ecclesiology, sacramentology, and eschatology are omitted and prolegomena is treated only briefly. Greatest emphasis is placed on anthropology, soteriology, and apologetics.

The work is designed to enable upper-level college and seminary students, pastors, and laymen to think through the Christian worldview. It is written with enough exegetical and theological material to serve as a textbook, but without the laborious detail, philosophical complexity, and polysyllabic vocabulary that tends to discourage the mid-range reader.

Behind the author's "total personality" approach, which attempts to blend the search for objective truth with a passionate zeal (the author intentionally writes in the first person), are forty years of teaching systematic theology on the college level and ministering to the needs and problems of individual students. The author's years of study, reflection, ministry experience, decades of faithful Christian walk, and pastoral concerns, all come together to produce a book which is theological, pastoral, and apologetic.

The author first (chap. 1) presents his presuppositions (including inerrancy and premillennialism), his desire to present the basic truths of the Christian faith out of a heart for redemptive concern, and his approach that necessitates the interweaving of the academic, the practical, and the systematic in order to attempt to answer what he sees as the inescapable questions of life. He insists that truth will invariably touch four basic relationships: man's relationship with God, with other people, with himself, and with the created order.

Next the history of Western epistemology is traced briefly (chap. 2) from Copernicus to the postmodern era of doubt, ambivalence, and pluralism. The author sets forth four tests for evaluating a worldview in the contemporary setting: (1) Does it answer the inescapable questions of life? (2) Is there internal consistency? (3) Is there causal adequacy? and (4) Does it conform to that which is undeniably true? These tests are especially relevant in the postmodern intellectual milieu, which the author insightfully describes as a failed, but dangerous, experiment.

In contrast to secular epistemology is the author's bibliography (chaps. 3, 4). Included under general revelation is the fact that human beings, created in the image of God, are preprogrammed with a knowledge of what God is like. This revelation alone, along with special revelation that has been incorporated into Scripture (which is inerrant in the original manuscripts and must be interpreted according to the grammatico-historical method), provides the much-needed answers to the inescapable questions.

The Scriptures point to a God who is personal, independent, immutable, omniscient, omnipotent, holy, loving, wise, good and truthful (chap. 5). His single essence is shared fully by three persons (chap. 6).

At this point Forlines pauses to develop his four tests for worldviews (chap. 7), tests which are validated by both man's constitutional makeup and the theistic arguments. They demonstrate the reasonableness and the singular ability of the Christian worldview to meet fully the needs of both the human mind and heart.

This apologetic leads to the author's anthropology (chaps. 8, 9) in which dichotomy and traducianism are defended. Man came into being, not through evolution, but through the creative work of God which took place during six solar days (hence a young earth). Man is a person created both in the rational and moral likeness of God and is designed for relationships. Because of man's personhood and its resulting interplay of dependence, independence, and interdependence, Forlines argues that "influence and response" are more appropriate terms for describing the interaction of the divine in the human decision-making process than the more determinative "cause and effect."

Sin has caused a malfunction in the divine image in man, so that while the constituent parts remain intact after the fall (sin is transmitted according to the natural headship view), man no longer thinks, acts, and feels in a way that is pleasing to God. Although man may rightly be described as totally depraved, as a person he retains the power of choice, but his will can be exercised only within the framework of possibilities established by God; hence it is not an absolute freedom. Therefore, influence can be brought to bear upon his will but cannot guarantee or determine its actions. "Dead in trespasses and sins" means that man is cut off from communion with God, not that he is totally deaf toward God's communications.

After anthropology the author presents his Christology (chap. 10). Christ, who came both to be man's kinsman redeemer and to reveal God to man, is fully human and fully divine in one person. He was impeccable, though his temptations and triumphs were real. He was raised, ascended, was exalted, and will remain forever in the same physical body which he possessed during his earthly life.

Christology is followed by the author's soteriology (chap. 11). He defends the penal satisfaction view of the atonement, which includes both the active and passive obedience of Christ, and rejects the governmental view held by a number of Arminians. Through union with Christ the benefits of Christ's atoning work become the believer's in a real, not merely declarative, sense. Consistent with the author's view of personhood is his defense of the traditional age of accountability at which time, but not before, infants are held liable for their sin before God.

By its nature the valid experience of justification necessarily results in sanctification, and it is only easy-believism which says otherwise (chap. 12). Scripture teaches that there is a basic change in the personality of redeemed people both in the conscious and sub-conscious levels, so that subsequent actions reflect the changed inner nature. Self-denial is required, but not the annihilation of the self. Sanctification involves the restoration of the functional likeness of God that was lost in the fall. Forlines defends the Classical Arminian view of conditional monergism in regard to justification and regeneration, which he sees as acts of God but acts which do not take place without the exercise of faith on the part of the recipient.

Salvation is conditioned upon a single, not double, response that may be described both as an attitude "from" sin and "to" Christ (chap. 13). Faith that involves a commitment to Christ, including his Lordship, is part of a framework of possibilities created by the Holy Spirit for the will. Forlines charges that if regeneration is the beginning of sanctification and God cannot enter with his sanctifying grace until the guilt is removed via justification, then Calvinism is in trouble with its view of regeneration as prior to justification. Furthermore, there can be no regeneration before faith

because regeneration is a redemptive act. Justification is grounded on Christ alone but is bestowed only on the condition of faith.

By these Arminian principles Forlines concludes that it is possible for a person who has been truly saved to become once again lost and fall under the wrath of God, though this apostasy can occur but once (chap. 14). He attacks the popular “once saved, always saved” concept and counters Calvinism by arguing that the ability to fall away is necessitated both by the definition of a person and certain “apostasy” texts such as Heb 6:4–6 and 10:26–29. He further argues that while the Calvinistic “cause and effect” model is unable to harmonize the entrance of sin into the universe with the sovereignty of God, the “influence and response” model sees God’s wisdom as bringing about the execution of his will, particularly using the conditional continuance of salvation in the matter of the believer’s perseverance.

At this point the author presents his understanding of the doctrine of election (chap. 15). He argues against both the unlimited and limited views of determinism that he detects in various Calvinistic writers with their different orders of the decrees. He attempts to counter the Calvinistic doctrine of election on the basis of its three assumptions. (1) Against the principle that divine sovereignty requires unconditional election, he argues that man’s personhood negates the “cause and effect” model while the “influence and response” model better fits the biblical anthropology. Forlines holds that God’s inscrutable foreknowledge of events means that it is certain that they will occur but not that they are necessary. The sovereign and wise God is able to accomplish his purposes through the appropriate “influence and response.” (2) Against the assertion that total depravity precludes the response of faith from a sinner before regeneration, Forlines maintains that the satisfaction view of the atonement implies that God cannot regenerate before the guilt of sin is removed through justification. (3) Against the statement that free salvation precludes conditional election, Forlines argues that there are conditional efficacious decrees, decrees to influence, and decrees to permit events such as sin, by which God works effectively.

To buttress his defense of the classical Arminian view of election, Forlines challenges the exegetical understanding of important texts used by Calvinists to support conditional election, such as Rom 9:14–29; 8:30; John 1:12–13; 3:14–15; 8:37–44; and Acts 13:48 (chap. 16). He concludes that none of these passages requires unconditional election; he furthermore believes that Romans 9 supports conditional election.

Having dealt with the “Calvinistic texts,” Forlines proceeds to marshal biblical support for conditional election (chap. 17). He concludes from (1) his study of the Greek words *proorizō* (predestine), *proginōskō* (foreknow), *eklegomai* (elect), *haireomai* (chosen), and *eklogē* (elected); (2) the extent of the offer of salvation, including the broadness of those called and the “whosoever” passages; (3) the unlimited extent of the atonement, which he sees in verses such as John 3:16 and 1 Tim 2:6; (4) the logical requirement of avoiding universalism; (5) the necessity of avoiding a double payment with regard to sinners in hell; and (6) God’s desire for the salvation of sinners (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9) that unconditional election is the biblical implication.

The author’s final chapter (chap. 18) deals with communicating the Christian message in a postmodern culture. Forlines perceptively reviews the cultural shifts that have produced the postmodern mindset and asserts the importance and sole adequacy of both general and special revelation in ministering to the contemporary paradigm.

At the end of the book are two appendices, one on the sins of ignorance and presumptuous sins in both testaments and another on legalism in the book of Galatians. The footnotes for the entire book follow the appendices, and at the very end are the author/subject and the Scripture indices.

The author is to be commended on a number of counts. He gives careful attention to exegetical detail and demonstrates an unusual combination of intellectual argument and spiritual application. He also takes “the high road” in his argumentation, avoiding

ad hominem tactics. He evidences careful reading of the original works of those whom he opposes (principally Calvinistic writers) and carefully attempts to distinguish between their views and common caricatures of those views.

Calvinistic writers will disagree on a number of matters. They will be unsympathetic to the suggested adequacy of his "influence and response" model as an explanation of God's exercise of his sovereignty in regard to the human will. While not denying the integrity of human personhood, Calvinists operate with a far more radical and absolute understanding of total depravity and the condition of spiritual death, which can only be remedied by a cataclysmic act of the Holy Spirit. They will also object to the failure to distinguish adequately between the logical and the chronological orders of the decrees, a distinction that allows regeneration to come logically before faith and repentance. Reformed writers will also disagree on the interpretation of many texts involving unconditional election, perseverance, and eternal security.

But Forlines has presented to the Christian community an excellent practical presentation and defense of the classical non-Wesleyan Arminianism that is rarely represented in the systematic theology sections of academic and church libraries, a challenge for Calvinistic writers to answer, and an example of the necessary and fruitful wedding of doctrine and life directed toward the zealous ministry of the gospel toward the lost.

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Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism. By Millard Erickson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 335 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Millard Erickson has provided readers with another splendid treatment of the movement of postmodernism. As the title indicates, he thoroughly deals with the promises and potential benefits of postmodernism while contrasting them with its perils and proposing that the evangelical world must move beyond this phenomenon. His primary purpose for dealing with this topic once again is not only to "acquaint the reader with the content and to some extent the style, of the intellectual leaders of postmodernism" but also to highlight a sketch of what he labels "postpostmodernism" (p. 9). Erickson's book provides a good survey of postmodernism and its development, yet it challenges Christian readers to engage their culture and think beyond postmodernism.

While Erickson remains aware of objections raised by postmodernists when they are critiqued, he begins his first section of the book, "Backgrounds to Postmodernism," with a brief examination of three other critiques of postmodernism. He discusses Jean-Francois Lyotard, Alasdair MacIntyre, and the husband and wife team James W. McClendon, Jr., and Nancey Murphy. The purpose of this chapter is to provide three distinct characterizations of postmodernism before he tackles the subject. Erickson admits that for a true critique of postmodernism, one can neither articulate every detail without producing a library nor can one "give several summary statements" without being "hopelessly general and vague" (p. 31). In order to deal fairly with postmodernism, Erickson will proceed by allowing the major representatives of the movement to speak for themselves. While this may not cover all of the variety contained within one movement, it is the only viable way to provide a fair treatment.

Erickson recognizes that postmodernism did not appear in a philosophical vacuum but is a reaction to philosophies of earlier eras. Continuing with his first section, Erickson's second chapter, entitled "Premodernism," summarizes the thought of Plato, Augustine, and Aquinas. Moving into "Modernism" (chap. 3), there is a brief analysis of Descartes, Newton, Locke, and Kant as "four major representatives of the modern mind"

in the fields of philosophy and science (p. 53). In these four thinkers, he highlights the belief that objectivity is desirable and possible in order to illustrate further the contrast that postmodernists bring in reaction. Chapter 4 is a discussion of "Nineteenth-century Precursors to Postmodernism," in particular, Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. Notably, Kierkegaard contributes to the concept of a subjective basis for knowledge that is prevalent in postmodern thought. Similarly, Nietzsche's main contribution was his "attack on the Enlightenment view of knowledge as fixed, objective, and absolute" (p. 90).

Chapter 5 introduces figures that were influential in transitioning into postmodernism. Erickson offers brief discussions of Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Thomas Kuhn, Max Scheler, and Karl Mannheim. The primary purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the philosophical shift towards relativistic thought. With this range of examples, Erickson correctly documents the shift from pure objectivity into more relativistic views before he begins his developed discussion on postmodernism.

In the second section of his book, Erickson summarizes four of the major proponents of the postmodern movement: Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Richard Rorty, and Stanley Fish, devoting a chapter to each individual. In addition to interacting with the key work of each proponent and offering extensive quotes with an elaboration of the context, he concisely summarizes their main points at the end of the chapter so that the reader does not drown in detail. Avoiding oversimplifications, Erickson's format allows for easy referencing for students of philosophy.

As insightful as his discussion of the major tenets of postmodernism is, Erickson's evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of postmodernism in the third section outshines it. Before engaging the negative aspects of the movement, he offers positive evaluations of the movement without embracing postmodernism in its entirety or compromising his intent of a "postpostmodernism." Erickson readily points out that one cannot deny the fact that presuppositions influence our thinking and methodology. He suggests that we let the full weight of our presuppositions challenge our own thinking at every step. Erickson even goes so far to suggest, "This includes the contention that there are alternative logics" (p. 189).

Erickson gives a fair hearing of Foucault's objection that all claims to objective knowledge are forms of power assertion in an attempt to dominate. Listing ten categories with potent examples of dishonest uses of knowledge to assert power, he illustrates that "truth can be manipulated as a means to achieving one's ends" (p. 194). This challenges readers at all levels to take seriously the task of academic integrity in an age of information by balancing integrity before a watching world with zeal for the truth.

Erickson springboards into his critique of postmodernism, which is more detailed than his positive comments. He responds to the critiques postmodernists raise when their own views are evaluated or even deconstructed. Moving on, Erickson attacks the inconsistencies in the logic of postmodernism. He remarks, "Ironically, this very claim to exemption of deconstruction requires the deconstruction of deconstruction" (p. 206). Seeing right through the guise of postmodernists being misunderstood, Erickson points out, "Anyone who writes in an abstruse style such as the one postmodernists often employ has, however, forfeited some degree of the right to complain of being misunderstood. If such a reply is to be employed, some concerted effort should be made to clarify what is being said" (p. 217). Postmodernists cannot assert their own forms of power play simply because they are postmodernists.

The strength of Erickson's critiques carries over into the fourth section in his discussion of the course we must take to move beyond postmodernism. He offers suggestions for "reducing one's own conditionedness" (p. 241) as well as "improving the quality of dialogue" (p. 245). In a very practical application, Erickson suggests that "each aca-

demically write his or her own autobiography, not with the aim of publishing it, but of contributing to self-understanding" (p. 241). Throughout the chapter, Erickson maintains and demonstrates that "discussion and debate, even when claimed to extend across paradigms, presupposes a common view of truth and logic" (p. 251).

In the next two chapters, Erickson defends Christianity and its claim to absolute truth. Without engaging in a full-scale apologetic for Christianity, he first suggests that not only does Christianity in general work pragmatically, but it also offers logical consistency and coherence. He further elaborates that Christianity involves actual historical occurrences, accounts for the supernatural, and offers "metaphysical intelligibility" allowing us to make greater sense of our position in relationship to the transcendent God. While acknowledging that he is not offering a complete epistemology or apologetic, I find his brevity to be a weakness. He would do well to add some theological discussion at this point, particularly to illustrate where theology has been negatively influenced by postmodernism. By illustrating where Christianity has compromised, he would better convey the gravity of the situation and thereby make his challenge sharper.

Erickson takes into account the necessity of Christianity as a metanarrative. After noting a few brief objections to metanarratives, he defends Christianity as a complete metanarrative. Here his discussion could be augmented by citing a few recent theologians who have defended Christianity as a metanarrative, such as D. A. Carson in *The Gagging of God* (Zondervan, 1996). While affirming that it is a metanarrative, Erickson seems to ignore some of the problems the world has with Christianity. In particular, he would do well to point out the problem of hypocrisy, which may be seen as a failure in individuals to live out the metanarrative they profess. From the human perspective, hypocrisy hinders our proclamations before a postmodern world that relies heavily on subjective truth.

In chap. 15, Erickson defends Christianity as the ultimate community. Using George Ladd's definition of the kingdom of God, he moves into a discussion of the nature of the authority of God as the ultimate definition for the Christian community. He reminds the reader that the kingdom of God expands through time as well as culture and socioeconomic groups. He further warns the reader against ideological imperialism granting some credence to postmodern objections.

The final chapter has an eye towards the future. Erickson advocates an approach to presenting Christianity that "seeks to adapt to a given context by expressing itself in such a way as to be understandable by those in that situation" (p. 308). He does not, however, deny the offense of the gospel: "Our goal is to make sure that we do not eliminate the normal and necessarily and inherent scandal of the gospel, while avoiding the unnecessary obstacles of poor representation by the messenger" (p. 208). He offers several suggestions for relating to postmodernism including "sneaking up on people with the truth" (p. 307); Nathan's confrontation of David in 2 Sam 12:1-14 is an illustration. Erickson seeks to bring balance to the Christian presentation while avoiding the pitfalls. He suggests reasoned arguments will not remain completely persuasive; still, he urges Christians to demonstrate integrity by avoiding invalid arguments for Christianity.

Truth or Consequences introduces readers to postmodernism and its dangers. Without embracing postmodernism in its entirety, Erickson agrees with some of the valid objects postmodernists raise, yet he astutely critiques postmodernism. He challenges Christian readers to think beyond postmodernism. He does not fall into the trap of assuming postmodernism is the climax of philosophical development and warns readers to be wary of this trap as well.

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Most Moved Mover: A Theology of God's Openness. By Clark H. Pinnock. Carlisle: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001, xiii + 202 pp., \$16.99 paper.

Clark Pinnock is a household name in wider evangelical theological circles. In the preface to *Most Moved Mover*, he refers to his life as a theologian as “a journey of discovery” and to himself as “a pilgrim” (p. ix). To those who have followed his now thirty-five-plus year career, from New Orleans Seminary to Trinity Evangelical Divinity School to Regent College to McMaster Divinity College, and from Calvinism through Arminianism to his present open theism stance, this self-characterization is an understatement.

Most Moved Mover (the title contrasts with the Aristotelian “unmoved mover” concept) contains four chapters, originally the 2000 (or 2001 [?]; see p. 204) Didsbury Lectures at Nazarene Theological College, Manchester, England. In his introduction (written for this published version), Pinnock provides a crash course in the main tenets of open theism, the volatile history of the controversy (from an open theist viewpoint), and open theism’s methodology and philosophy of biblical interpretation (a tweaked “quadrilateral” approach). There is also a stirring appeal for tolerance and fair treatment towards open theism within evangelicalism.

Chapter 1, “The Scriptural Foundations,” is an accumulating framework of principal concepts contained in openness theology. The more weighty issues, which Pinnock unpacks as the chapter progresses, include God’s personal relationship with the world, God’s “partners” (oddly overlooking the church, though Israel is treated), the partly settled future, God’s passion and suffering, and the problems with “traditional” hermeneutics. It should be noted that Pinnock’s approach to laying these foundations is basically proof-texting; substantial exegetical work is noticeably absent.

Chapter 2, “Overcoming a Pagan Inheritance,” develops three key ideas. First, following previous openness volumes, Pinnock claims that classical theism has been infected by Greek philosophical thought (hence, the “pagan inheritance”) since the late patristic era. Second, the shape of evangelical theology today is addressed, along with needed revisions in the doctrine of God according to the open theism model. Third, proper relationships among Scripture, tradition, and culture are explained as Pinnock attempts an apologetic for open theism and its theological agenda.

In chap. 3, “The Metaphysics of Love,” Pinnock moves into the realm of philosophy/philosophical theology. With the subheading, “The Two Horizons,” Pinnock pits the philosophy of “the ancients” against that of our present day; through the alleged disparity, he defends the philosophical reasonableness of open theism. He then sketches a “biblical philosophy,” treating such topics as the future, the problem of evil, and the purpose of creation. The most intriguing section of the chapter, however, addresses the relationship between process theology and open theism, with Pinnock taking care to accentuate the differences over the similarities (though expressing real appreciation for process thought).

Chapter 4, “The Existential Fit” (an appropriately postmodern title), is a look at the practical ramifications of open theism, handling topics ranging from the “friendship of the Lord” to sanctification to prayer. Here, Pinnock is appealing to the complementary relationship between theology and experience, which he, in virtually the same manner as openness proponents before him, claims open theism better fulfills.

In the conclusion, Pinnock essentially poses the rhetorical question, “Will the open view of God be widely accepted?” Picking up where the introduction’s emotional appeal leaves off, he continues to challenge evangelical scholars to consider seriously the open view of God and its proposed contributions to theology as a whole. The book is crowned by an extensive bibliography.

In terms of the strengths (i.e. intended here as perceived positive contributions) of *Most Moved Mover*: (1) The biggest name and senior theologian of the openness movement has weighed in with a book-length treatment, in his own inimitable style. (2) There

is a more forthright “showing of the hand” here in regard to hermeneutical/theological starting points/methodology than in the previous openness works. (3) There is worthwhile discussion of certain important theological areas (e.g. immutability and impassibility), as well as a bit more realistic acknowledgement of the anthropomorphic nature of some of the key passages in the openness debate. (4) In his plea for openness to be allotted some foothold on evangelical turf, Pinnock honestly admits that Calvinists, mainline Arminians, and other evangelicals are not receptive to this movement. As a result, Pinnock hones in on the Pentecostal wing as the remaining promising haven for openness theism in the growing evangelical storm. (Looking ahead to where the openness controversy will go from here, there is no guarantee, however, that wider Pentecostalism will sympathetically receive it.) (5) The bibliography, though selected, is the most up-to-date listing of works concerning the openness of God viewpoint and related questions that we have seen in print and is, thus, a helpful starting point for research.

As far as weaknesses are concerned: (1) Pinnock has woven a disconcerting hermeneutical pattern, employing a sentimentalized “biblical” collage approach wherein the OT is heavily accentuated (a ratio of 93 OT passages to 28 NT passages) in the first two chapters to make the biblical and theological case for open theism. Then, ironically, in the arena of practical implications (the last two chapters), Pinnock reverses the proportion to accent NT passages (52 NT passages to 13 OT passages). In other words, the openness position comes off as a top-heavy old covenant construct, which then is brought across and applied to the new covenant. Even though, admittedly, much evangelical theological reflection is overbalanced toward the NT, Pinnock’s reverse proportioning does not succeed in balancing the biblical/theological scales. (2) Here is yet another openness work *assuming* that the kind of world that God created is one of libertarian freedom with love as the be-all and end-all, then extrapolating from there. Biblically and logically, how does this procedure differ from and improve on that which draws the ire of openness theologians—the Calvinist starting point of a created order ruled by meticulous sovereignty/providence, from which extrapolations are made? (3) Besides the distance he attempts to insert between process thought and open theism, Pinnock fails to address the major criticisms of openness theology. He just hammers evangelical critics for being blindly captive to Greek thought, with little corresponding admission of openness’s own reliance on postmodernism. (4) The epidemic spelling, punctuation, and style errors may reflect careless editing. However, the possibility must be considered that the errors are the result of a rush to publication so as to influence the 2001 national meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, whose theme of “Defining Evangelicalism’s Boundaries” spotlighted openness as the hottest boundary issue. (5) At the end of the day, while Pinnock does update the debate, he does *not* notably advance the argument for open theism. Beyond occasional creative nuances or implications, this is more of the same as earlier openness volumes. One begins to wonder if openness thinkers believe that saying the same thing over and over will have a mantra effect. One also wonders why they seem reticent to tease out in print the (likely even more radical) implications of their position in regard to other major doctrines beyond theology proper (and angelology, for Greg Boyd).

As for a recommendation: if you have already read *The Openness of God*, *The God Who Risks*, or *God of the Possible*, what you will get in *Most Moved Mover* is a slick re-packaging as a passionate “political” plea (Pinnock’s term certainly applies as much to him as to evangelicals he roasts as “politically” motivated). Still, this is vintage Pinnock: At once the winsome wooer of the evangelical rank-and-file and gadfly of the far left, with shrewd selectivity he has presented the openness view attractively and as sympathetically as possible, while “pushing the buttons” of his critics all along the way. Bottom line: we urge cautious, attentive engagement by evangelical readers. They must recognize that Pinnock is proceeding from assumptions with a postmodernist, existential fit, that his argumentation is one-sided, and that his position has exceedingly

far-reaching (most disturbing) implications. Otherwise, *Most Moved Mover* may seem “much more moving” rhetorically and emotionally than what it packs in actual theological substance.

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Portraits of God: A Biblical Theology of Holiness. By Allan Coppedge. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 432 pp., \$29.99.

This book has three purposes: (1) to identify and examine the major portraits or roles of God in order to understand how they illuminate our knowledge of and relationship to him; (2) to show how these roles connect biblical studies with systematic theology; and (3) to show the centrality of holiness for understanding God’s nature. Coppedge also hopes to create fresh dialogue across Christian traditions and show the practical implications of theology.

Coppedge argues that “in using the language of this world to talk about a transcendent God, the best way to describe God in relation to reality is by the use of *analogical language* (using terms that are alike in some ways, but not in all ways)” (p. 23). Metaphor is the analogical language used to describe God. The personal metaphors used are portraits or roles; they are helpful for understanding God’s being, actions, and relationships to humans. Eight divine roles are primary: creator, king, personal revealer, priest, judge, Father, redeemer, and shepherd. Each role is described by explicating the theological themes of the triune God (Father, Son, and Spirit respectively), man and woman, sin, salvation, atonement, growth, Church, full sanctification, and glorification. The divine attributes that relate to each role are also introduced.

Coppedge argues that holiness is the central and most pervasive concept of God in Scripture. While sovereignty is significant, holiness better unifies the attributes and roles of God. Holiness is ceremonial and moral, with six components of meaning: separation, brilliance, righteousness, love, power, and goodness. These components correspond to the eight roles (separation and brilliance each apply to two, while the other four apply to one role each).

Following two introductory chapters, chapters three through ten unpack the roles. The fourth chapter, “Holy God as Sovereign King,” provides a good example. The role of God as sovereign king relates to the concept of holiness as separation and the language figure for the role relates to royalty. God the Father is understood as king over Israel and one who institutes the monarchy in Israel. Terms such as “Lord” and “warrior king” illuminate this metaphor. The Son is Messiah, Christ, King, Prince, Lord, and Head, and the Holy Spirit is the executive of the Godhead. Men and women are servants or subjects of the king with Jesus as a model. Sin as act is rebellion and rebelliousness is the state of sin. Salvation is pardon through repentance and faith, and the satisfaction and governmental atonement theories fit here. Growth results from increasing obedience, but salvation can be lost. The Church is the people of God under divine kingship, sometimes referred to as a kingdom or nation. Full sanctification is total submission and entire consecration to Christ’s Lordship, and glorification is seen as the eternal heavenly kingdom. Omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience are the attributes related to the kingly role. Each chapter on the divine roles takes a similar course. The final chapter shows the theological and practical implications of the roles and admirably succeeds in showing how there can be a bridge between biblical studies and systematic theology.

Does Coppedge accomplish his three purposes? Yes, in a very thorough fashion. Written with a distinctive Wesleyan flavor, this book is useful across the Christian tra-

ditions, and readers will find themselves increasing in intellectual and personal knowledge of God regardless of tradition. There is clear and nearly exhaustive biblical material here for studying about God, and it is a good starting point for systematic theology. Though there are some technical terms, this book is accessible to informed laity as well as ministers and scholars.

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The Clarity of Scripture: History, Theology & Contemporary Literary Studies. By James Patrick Callahan. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2001, 272 pp., \$18.00 paper.

The perspicuity or clarity of Scripture has been discussed and disputed since the first century, but the Protestant Reformation asserted Scripture to be innately perspicuous and perspicuously understandable as the sole rule of faith and practice preeminent over the Church. By contrast, the Roman Catholic Church, via its commitment to an authoritative allegorical interpretive methodology interactive with its theological and philosophical "Tradition," asserted Scripture to be imperspicuous apart from the interpretive framework that was the Catholic Church itself, thereby affirming the preeminence of the Church over Scripture. By the seventeenth century, however, the burgeoning diversity of competing Protestant theologies arising from perspicuous Scripture made clear the irony of variant theologies uniformly arguing for scriptural perspicuity in the midst of their contrasting and even contradictory positions. *The Clarity of Scripture* rehearses these and other developments in its historical survey of the doctrine of scriptural perspicuity (part one), then attempts to develop a contemporary statement of scriptural perspicuity (part two).

James Callahan's development of this irony begins with an attempt to clarify clarity by clearly defining his terms; this includes an excellent analysis and later critique of the concept of authorial intent. He argues for an interactive and interlocking unity of text, reader, and reading that rejects the innate perspicuity of the text—what he terms "textual clarity." For Callahan, the original meaning—what Scripture *meant*—is no more important than what Scripture *means* to the reader. With the truths of Scripture not resident solely in Scripture but dependent on Christian readers ("one finds clearly in Scripture what is most congenial to the reader"; p. 207) and their varying perspectives ("our reading circumstances"; p. 207), Callahan's "clear" definition of terms results in a statement of scriptural perspicuity that is so obfuscated that each verse of Scripture may have an infinite number of meanings and truths all relative to the readers and the readers' response. Obviously, Callahan rejects the medieval and Reformation conviction that meaning and clarity reside innately in Scripture independent of its readers.

Callahan's historical survey provides a much-needed framework for the theological study of the doctrine of scriptural perspicuity. The weakness of this survey is that it is written in such a way as to obscure the differences and emphasize the correlatives that support Callahan's opaque contemporary statement of scriptural perspicuity. Although the perspectival and selective use of historical theology to prepare the ground on which one builds a doctrinal position is not new to theology, this approach lessens the usefulness of Callahan's historical survey as a framework for understanding the development of *claritas Scripturae Sacrae* and the role it played in the development of variant dogmatic, biblical, and systematic theologies within Christendom in general and Protestantism in particular.

An example of Callahan's selective history is seen in his discussion of the "letter" sense of Scripture versus the "spirit" sense of Scripture. He sees a growing de-emphasis

on the “literal” or “plain” sense of Scripture and a growing emphasis on the reader’s perspectival understanding of Scripture. Historians like Callahan not only filter their information and views through their personal worldview or historical paradigm, but they see or read the present in the past. From this perspective, current events are inevitable in light of the past; in other words, *the effect interprets the cause*. For Callahan, the effect is a perspectival perspicuity, and the cause is a growing rejection of an innately perspicuous Scripture containing innate discoverable divine truths in favor of the truths discoverable only in the interplay of the text, the reader, and the reader’s circumstances, i.e. perspectival perspicuity.

Callahan’s summary of the competing interpretive methodologies of the Syrian School at Antioch (literal) and the Alexandrian School (allegorical) is quite good. His synopsis of Augustine focuses on the theoretical views of Augustine concerning the “letter and spirit” of Scripture while virtually ignoring Augustine’s development of the interpretive principles (e.g. favoring clearer passages over obscure passages) used to achieve and enhance corporate clarity. Furthermore, Callahan’s medieval history is woefully lacking with only a short and overly simplified reference to Aquinas. The discussion of Zwingli’s position is adequate, but Callahan’s review of Erasmus and Luther is an oversimplification of both the issues on which they disputed and Luther’s doctrine of perspicuity. Callahan does not mention Luther’s “propositional perspicuity,” gives short shrift to the indigenous English development of this propositional perspicuity (although he tangentially refers to Tyndale and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* [WCF]), and mentions Calvin only in passing.

It is the exclusion of propositional perspicuity that most clearly demonstrates the selective nature of Callahan’s history. Luther does not deny that some passages are difficult to understand, but he locates the difficulty or obscurity not in the words of Scripture but in the limitations of the words in conveying the infinite or divine meaning to finite minds; that is, the proposition may be clear, but the meaning of the proposition is not always clear. The clarity of Scripture for Luther is not the same as Scripture being simple or easily comprehended. Even when the subject or propositions of Scripture are clear, they are not necessarily simple or easy to understand because the ideas, concepts, or meanings are beyond the ability of finite minds to comprehend. Luther’s propositional perspicuity asserts that the divergence of thought arising from the interpretation of a specific Scriptural passage resides in the failure of finite minds to understand uniformly ideas, concepts, or meanings that are infinite or divine. He understands that the reduction of infinite ideas, concepts, or meanings to finite understanding negates the infinity by placing it within the bounds of the finite. Majestic and profound matters are still majestic and profound, whether clear or unclear, and are not always resolvable by finite minds. For Luther, the problem is not Scripture, but finite people’s imperspicuous understanding of the innately perspicuous Scripture. Diverging widely from Luther’s position, Callahan maintains that perspicuity resides in the minds and the circumstances of finite readers interacting with the text and not in the independent propositions of Scripture themselves. This is the assumption that underlies, drives, and colors Callahan’s history of the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture.

Callahan contends, as have others (e.g. Hans Frei), that the Reformers’ view of scriptural perspicuity is so elemental as to result in no more than being able to agree on the consensual reading of the Scripture of the gospel message. In other words, the clearest part of the Scripture, where it is definitely meant to mean what it says and nothing else, is the gospel. Thus, in agreement with the post-Reformation Reformed Schoolmen, Callahan limits perspicuity to matters of or relating to salvation (as does the WCF)—what Callahan terms “evangelical clarity.”

As Callahan moves from his history to a synthesis of his concept of scriptural clarity, the paradigm that has directed his history becomes clear. Chapter six, “Textual Clarity,”

is well structured and a thorough critique of authorial intentionality from the perspective of modern hermeneutics. Though I would like to have seen it, Callahan does not integrate his theological history with the contemporaneous philosophical history in the first part of this work. For example, there is no discussion of the rise of rationalistic and empirical epistemologies to which Reformed Scholasticism was a response. Nevertheless, in this chapter Callahan skillfully draws together the post-Kantian questions of religious epistemology, the insights of philosophy of language in the last century, contemporary literary approaches to Scripture, and neo-orthodox attempts to formulate a responsive hermeneutic as a critique of corporately discoverable innate truths external to the reader.

Having rejected a "primarily historical critical" hermeneutic (p. 208), Callahan begins in the seventh chapter, "Intertextuality and Scripture's Perspicuity," to develop a literary hermeneutical interpretive matrix on which he synthesizes his doctrine of scriptural clarity. His idea of intertextuality is more a renaming of the systematization of the complex principles of contextualization framed in the Reformation such as Christological, internal, storic, corporate-theological, corporate-historical, corporate-social, pneumatic, and creedal contextualization. The difference between contextualization and intertextuality is that the former is more objective and the latter is more subjective. Callahan's conclusion is that "seeing something clearly concerning Scripture is, simply put, a matter of perspective, spiritual or moral—that is, not simply circumstantial . . ." (p. 224).

Chapter eight, "Reading with Clarity," is at once the most interesting and the most turbid chapter of the second part of the book. Having adopted a perspectival perspicuity, Callahan attempts to rename, redefine, and rehabilitate "reader response theory" hermeneutics. The ninth chapter, "Scripture's Intratextuality," provides a thoughtful and useful synopsis of structuralism, deconstructionism, and poststructuralism as well as an intriguing analysis, evaluation, and application of the work of Frank Kermode.

The Clarity of Scripture is a good starting point for the discussion of the doctrine of *claritas Scripturae Sacrae*, but James Callahan brings no resolution to the issues that he forwards so well. For Callahan, Scripture means what it says, but what it says is relative to the reader and the reader's response. Perhaps it is my response and that of my *Weltanschauung*, but Callahan's doctrine of scriptural perspicuity is no more than a lukewarm admonition to read and respond to Scripture in faith emphasizing "interpretation as a matter of testimony and conviction" (p. 248).

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Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit. By Clark Pinnock. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1996, 280 pp., \$16.99 paper. *Hearing God: Developing a Conversational Relationship with God.* By Dallas Willard. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999, 228 pp., \$12.99 paper. *Knowing the Face of God.* By Tim Stafford. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1996, 249 pp., \$14.00 paper. *The Sacred Romance.* By Brent Curtis and John Eldredge. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, 213 pp., \$13.99 paper. *The Shape of Living: Spiritual Directions for Everyday Life.* By David Ford. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997, 224 pp., \$14.99 paper. *Walk This Way: An Interactive Guide to Following Jesus.* By Tim Woodroof. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1999, 207 pp., \$14.00 paper.

In between the organizational morass of institutional Christendom and the New Age of spiritism lies the fertile, tenuous land of evangelical spiritual theology. In the

past five years the six books listed above have been added to the older works of Ian Thomas, Richard Foster, Andrew Murray, Oswald Sanders, and others.

Four common themes arise from these contributions: (1) a re-evaluation of individual and corporate dimensions of spiritual life; (2) practical theology and spirituality, that is, the daily experience of living the Christian life; (3) a means of personal spiritual enrichment; and (4) the contributions of historical theology to spiritual theology today. Each of the books marks a significant contribution to one of these themes, and some books address most of them. The books by Curtis and Eldredge, Pinnock, Stafford, and Willard primarily address spiritual issues, but all the books have some direct suggestions and applications for spiritual life. The works by Ford and Woodroof address practical spiritual issues, but include biblical and theological foundations.

Clark Pinnock's work is the only book that approaches the topic of spirituality directly and comprehensively. *Flame of Love* pursues the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in seven aspects, from God and Christ to universality and the truth. Pinnock interacts in the best theological tradition with many historical sources representing various approaches to understanding and practicing spirituality. He speaks to the heart of the issues that have arisen for humanity through the centuries and deals fairly with all the traditions. The tone of the volume maintains a consistently biblical theology and a vibrant understanding of the application of the resulting theology to life. The whole work manifests a passion for life in the Spirit. This is perhaps Pinnock's finest work as a systematic theologian. It is the most comprehensive of the six books on spiritual theology.

Ecclesiastes tells us we can look at life "under the sun" and see, on the one hand, the ultimate frustration of human striving. Or we can see, on the other hand, the same life as a gift from our loving God and receive it from him and find a new meaning to living. Curtis (since deceased) and Eldredge write about the beauty, majesty, and, from a human perspective, potential "wildness" of the presence of God in our lives. God invites us to walk with him and in his presence throughout our daily lives. The most intimate human relationship—love—is the model for explaining how we can have a deep personal relationship with a loving God. Their focus is on twentieth-century theology and applications.

Dallas Willard gives us by far the most personal and practical book. He teaches us how to "hear" God in everyday life, learning from traditions that have practiced the presence of God for many years. His chapters "The Still Small Voice and Its Rivals," "Recognizing the Voice of God," and "A Life More than Guidance" take an integrated spiritual theology to personal and practical ends. Willard also discusses the value of community with other spiritual persons, not only for safe living but also for practical living. The value of learning from the generations just ahead of us and the depth of fellowship with our peers are described in clear and personal detail.

Tim Stafford writes about the difference between knowing about God and knowing God as a part of a personal life of faith within a relational understanding and experience of life. He uses personal and biblical relationships to illustrate the possibility of living dynamically with God, day by day, and realizing and applying faith to the fact of God's love for us. Stafford's work is more personal than most but is well informed by biblical and historical information.

David Ford, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, writes about "spiritual directions for everyday living." In the "Foreword" the Archbishop of Canterbury describes the book as "an example of Anglican theology at its best." Ford includes both personal spiritual elements and lessons and applications from spiritual communities. The book is well balanced and biblical. My personal response is that the book seems impersonal and distant, but this may be so partly because of Ford's focus on life in England and use in each

chapter of poetry by Michael O'Siadhail. While each chapter touches on historical and biblical sources, the use of scholarship is slight. The book fulfills its purpose, but not as well as those by Pinnock and Willard.

The book by Woodroof uses a different approach. Each of the ten chapters starts with a practical and biblical discussion of one aspect of spiritual life, has quotes and stories from various authors, and offers suggestions of things to do and to read for each day of a week. This book can be a guide to spiritual growth as well as a theological understanding of growth. The format targets younger generations, and the book itself is somewhat less theological and more literary.

All of the above books represent Western Protestant theology with occasional interaction with Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox writers. They underscore a holistic view of the presence of God, through the Holy Spirit, in the lives of the saints. More remains to be done in terms of seeking contributions from Eastern Orthodox theology, particularly a deeper sense of community in theology and ministry. Despite this, these books bring us forward by summarizing Western spiritual theology and making it accessible to a wider audience.

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Two Views of Hell: A Biblical and Theological Dialogue. Edward William Fudge and Robert A. Peterson. Downers Grove: IVP, 2000, 228 pp., \$12.99 paper.

As this new millennium emerges, the doctrine of hell has become an important and controversial topic in contemporary evangelicalism. The rising interest likely stems from the current debate among evangelicals over annihilationism (sometimes called "conditionalism"). Although belief in annihilationism has existed for centuries, the teaching of it through evangelical publications is fairly recent. In 1974, InterVarsity Press hesitantly published John Wenham's *The Goodness of God*, in which Wenham embraced annihilationism. That same year InterVarsity Press printed Stephen Travis's *The Jesus Hope*, in which he tentatively embraced conditionalism. Edward Fudge then wrote "Putting Hell in Its Place" for *Christianity Today* (6 August 1976), "The Final End of the Wicked" for *JETS* (September 1984), and his massive *The Fire that Consumes* (Houston: Providential Press, 1984), the most thorough defense of conditionalism written recently. In 1988, evangelical statesman John Stott admitted that he "tentatively" held to annihilationism (*Evangelical Essentials*, IVP). The issue quickly escalated. Philip Hughes resigned from Westminster Theological Seminary and advocated conditionalism in *The True Image* (Eerdmans, 1989). Well-known scholars such as Clark Pinnock, Michael Green, Earle Ellis, and Robert Brow have since followed suit.

Evangelicals holding to the conscious, endless punishment of unbelievers refused to sit by idly. They responded using philological, exegetical, philosophical, polemical, and theological methodologies. Robert Peterson's *Hell on Trial* (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1995) stands out as the best argument for endless punishment written recently.

The genius of *Two Views of Hell* is that it brings the leading defender of endless punishment, Robert Peterson, together with the leading proponent of conditionalism, Edward Fudge. Peterson is Professor of Theology at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, edits the journal *Presbyterion*, and is the author of *Calvin's Doctrine of the Atonement*, *Getting to Know John's Gospel*, *Hell on Trial*, and numerous articles. Fudge, a lawyer in Houston, has written a commentary on Hebrews, *The Fire that Consumes*, several privately published books, and numerous articles.

Two Views on Hell opens with a brief introduction to the evangelical debate surrounding annihilationism. Fudge then contends for conditionalism, which Peterson critiques. Peterson subsequently offers his rationale for endless punishment, to which Fudge responds.

Fudge begins with a denial of the traditional doctrine of hell: "The fact is that the Bible does not teach the traditional view of final punishment. Scripture nowhere suggests that God is an eternal torturer. It never says the damned will writhe in ceaseless torment or that the glories of heaven will forever be blighted by the screams from hell. The idea of conscious everlasting torment was a grievous mistake, a horrible error, a gross slander against the heavenly Father, whose character we truly see in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Scripture instead teaches that those who go to hell will experience 'everlasting destruction' in 'the second death,' for God is able to 'destroy both the body and soul in hell'" (pp. 20–21). He proceeds by rejecting the immortality of the soul as unbiblical and derivative of Greek thought and instead proposes conditional immortality, the idea that God bestows immortality only to believers by virtue of their union with Christ. Fudge then peruses various OT passages and suggests that divine judgment was linked with total destruction. He suggests that the devastation through the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah serve as prototypes of divine judgment. He argues that "everlasting burning" is synonymous with "consuming fire" in Isa 33:14. Fudge also interprets Isaiah's phrase "their worm will not die, nor will their fire be quenched" (66:24) as signifying disgrace and indicative of complete destruction. He misunderstands the reference to "everlasting contempt" in Dan 12:1–2 to mean irreversible disintegration.

Using his interpretations of the OT as his foundation, Fudge considers the teaching on hell in the NT. He concludes that the expression "weeping and gnashing of teeth" refers to the extreme misery and rage of those under judgment, that Jesus' parable in Luke 16:19–31 does not refer to the final state, and that Gehenna implies destruction. He argues that punishment will be eternal in that it occurs in the age to come or that its results are irreversible. Fudge later claims: "What the cross shows us is a picture of total destruction and death from which God alone can deliver" (p. 55). He then interprets 2 Thess 1:5–11 based on his conclusions on Isaiah 66 and understands Rev 14:9–11 and 20:7–15 according to his theses about the meaning of "destruction" and "eternal."

Fudge concludes by pointing out that one's view of hell flows from one's conclusions concerning the nature of human immortality, God's justice, and divine love. He asks: "But are we to believe that God, who 'so loved' the world that he gave His only Son to die for our sins (Jn 3:16), will also keep millions of sinners alive so he can torment them endlessly throughout all eternity?" (p. 81). He concludes that conditionalism "frees us from pagan notions of indestructible souls which even God cannot destroy, of vindictive deities who delight in tormenting their victims, of men and women doomed to writhe in agonizing pain forever and ever without end" (p. 82).

In his response, Peterson asserts that Fudge's arguments seem quite impressive only initially: "In fact, when the sum is evaluated on the basis of its parts, the case is weak" (p. 84). He criticizes some techniques employed by Fudge, asserting that he occasionally refutes only a caricature of the traditional view. Peterson also maintains that Fudge sometimes argues from silence, uses Greek ostentatiously, and misrepresents endless punishment by charged language.

Peterson then challenges Fudge's claim that belief in the immortality of the soul drives endless punishment. He maintains: "I do not accept traditionalism because I believe in the immortality of the soul. I believe in the immortality of human beings (united in body and soul after the resurrection of the dead) because the Bible teaches that there will be 'eternal punishment' for the lost and 'eternal life' for the saved (Mt. 25:46)"

(pp. 88–89). Peterson charges that Fudge often confuses temporal judgments with the final judgment, cites unrelated OT passages as support for conditionalism, and utilizes an inadequate theological method.

While admitting that much of the NT vocabulary of destruction could be understood as teaching either traditionalism or annihilationism, Peterson contends that some verses are incompatible with annihilationism (e.g. 2 Thess 1:9): “Doesn’t unbelievers’ being shut out from the presence of the Lord imply their existence?” (p. 94). He also observes that the destruction prophesied for the beast in Rev 17:8–11 cannot mean annihilation because the beast still exists to be thrown alive into the fiery lake (Rev 19:20). Furthermore, the beast is still around one thousand years later (Rev 20:7–10) and will be “tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev 20:10). Peterson quips: “The beast’s ‘destruction,’ therefore, is not annihilation but eternal punishment!” (p. 95).

Peterson also challenges Fudge’s thesis concerning “eternal,” considers the case for conditional immortality to be linked logically with his denial of human existence in the intermediate state, criticizes Fudge’s view that Christ ceased to exist in death as undermining the Trinity and the hypostatic union, and asserts that he skirts around pivotal issues when interpreting important passages like Matt 25:41–46 and Rev 20:10–15. Peterson also suggests that Fudge reads annihilationism into OT texts and then reads his annihilationist interpretation of those texts into NT passages.

In the second half, Peterson presents a case for endless punishment and Fudge replies. Peterson begins by appraising the doctrine of hell in Tertullian, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, Francis Pieper, Louis Berkhof, Lewis Sperry Chafer, and Millard Erickson—each embracing endless punishment. He chose them because of their influence as well as their variation in locales, periods, and ecclesiastical movements: “This unified confession of traditionalism is impressive, and is not to be set aside lightly” (p. 128).

Peterson then proposes ten texts that he believes teach eternal conscious punishment of the wicked: Isa 66:22–24; Dan 12:1–12; Matt 18:6–9; 25:31–46; Mark 9:42–48; 2 Thess 1:5–10; Jude 7, 13, Rev 14:9–11; and 20:10, 14–15. He quotes each passage, seeks to establish that it indeed speaks of the final destiny of the unsaved, places it in context, considers its teaching concerning the nature and duration of hell, and then interacts with annihilationist interpretations of it. Peterson maintains that the phrases “eternal punishment” and “eternal life” in Matt 25:41–46 are parallel and cannot be satisfactorily rendered “irreversible” or “pertaining to the age to come.” He suggests that annihilation would be relief from punishment rather than retribution and that “eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels” matches the assertion that the devil will be “tormented day and night forever and ever” in Rev 20:10. Peterson concludes that human beings and the devil will be cast into the lake of fire, which entails being “tormented day and night forever and ever” (Rev 20:10–15).

After his exegesis, Peterson seeks to demonstrate how the doctrine of hell is linked to other doctrines. He maintains that Fudge argues for conditionalism on the basis of mortalism. Proposing the interrelationship of the atonement to hell, Peterson suggests, “because of the infinite dignity of Christ’s person, his sufferings, though finite in duration, were of infinite weight on the scales of divine justice” (p. 175).

In his response, Fudge claims that the Greek idea of the immortality of the soul led to belief in endless punishment; he also maintains that the medieval feudalistic systems of justice led Thomas Aquinas and Anselm to believe that finite humans could only pay for their sins against an infinite God by suffering endlessly. Fudge also asserts that Peterson feels bound to creeds, whereas he views creeds with suspicion. Fudge concludes: “Traditionalism, on the other hand, is at odds with all these great themes. It springs from a denial that God alone is immortal. It says that he is love but claims that he will keep people alive forever just to make them suffer. It says that he is just but

that he will punish people forever for deeds done during a few years on earth. . . . Traditionalism aborts the final victory of God, envisioning an eternal torture chamber. . . . It is a horrible doctrine, unworthy of God, foreign to the Bible, spawned by pagan philosophy, and preserved by human tradition. It deserves to be rejected once and for all" (p. 208).

Overall, Peterson makes a strong case for endless punishment and charges Fudge with dozens of logical fallacies, hermeneutical errors, and theological inconsistencies. Likewise, Fudge presents much evidence and questions Peterson's view of human immortality, his use of history in theology, and his focus on ten passages.

Unfortunately labeled as defending "traditionalism" ("endless punishment" seems better), Peterson deserves much praise for his careful selection and handling of pivotal passages dealing with the duration and nature of hell. His case for endless punishment seems very impressive and difficult to dispute. Peterson writes in a reader-friendly style and contributes several fresh insights.

Fudge also merits commendation as he displays great passion for his views and has compiled much information to bolster his case. Fudge's concern over the impact of Greek on the theology of hell deserves additional research. While his thesis concerning "eternal" seems unconvincing, his comments concerning "eternal sin" in Mark 3:29 also warrant further study.

Despite some worthy contributions, Fudge's overall case for conditionalism has significant problems. He frequently distorts the traditional approach to endless punishment as "endless torture," to God as "eternal torturer," and to hell as an "eternal torture chamber." Torture implies cruelty, whereas punishment suggests justice. He falsely alleges that those holding to endless punishment deny that God alone is immortal; on the contrary, traditionalists maintain that God grants endless existence to unbelievers for the purpose of punishing them. Fudge castigates Peterson for creedalism, yet he fails to recognize that his own views flow from his presuppositions concerning the nature of God's love, divine justice, victory, mortalism, and a particular view of Jesus' destruction on the cross. He derides Peterson for focusing on "only ten passages that he believes remotely support his view" (not necessarily a bad approach) but fails to answer sufficiently Peterson's careful exegesis of those texts. In his discussion of passages using "burn," Fudge subtly employs his annihilationist assumptions by speaking of unbelievers being "burned up." He also tends to interpret the clearer NT passages (Matt 25:41–46, 2 Thess 1:5–10, and Rev 20:7–15) in light of his understanding of certain unrelated OT judgment passages.

No doubt competent scholars with noble intentions stand on both sides of this debate over the doctrine of hell. Hopefully, *Two Versions of Hell* will encourage evangelicals to "search the Scriptures," thereby enhancing their understanding of this doctrine and moving them to contemplate the extent of God's grace.

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Calvin: A Biography. By Bernard Cottret. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000, 367 pp. \$28.00.

This translation of Cottret's biography of Calvin is a welcome addition to the ongoing flood of material published about this seminal figure of the Protestant Reformation. In spite of the huge number of articles and monographs on Calvin, there is a dearth of biographies suitable as texts for courses on Calvin and on the Reformation. Cottret fills that void, especially when used in conjunction with Richard Muller's recent work,

The Unaccommodated Calvin, a series of essays dealing with various aspects of the development of Calvin's thought. Other biographies of Calvin fall short of Cottret. For example, Bouwsma's *John Calvin: A Sixteenth-Century Portrait* focuses on the apparent dichotomy in Calvin's personality and tells us as much about Bouwsma as it does about Calvin. McGrath's *A Life of John Calvin* is out of print and does not maintain as high a level of academic quality as does Cottret. T. H. L. Parker's *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought* is simply too short and focuses more on Calvin's writings than on the life and ministry of the reformer.

Cottret's work is more of a historical biography rather than a theological analysis of Calvin's writings. Cottret is particularly strong on Calvin's education and early career. The author divides his work into two sections. The first is a chronological analysis of Calvin's life and ministry. The second focuses on the development of his thought with three themes: Calvin as a polemist, as a preacher, and as a writer.

Scholars have long debated the date of Calvin's conversion to the Reformation cause. The issue revolves around his preface to his Psalms commentary written seven years before his death. His purpose in discussing his conversion was to validate God's hand in calling him to faith and to his ministry. The key phrase in Calvin's discussion is *conversio subita*, which carries a passive sense of a conversion "suffered" with God as the initiator. In this context, Calvin compares himself to David rather than to the apostle Paul. David was the prototype of the elect because God called and sustained him in spite of his moral failures. In addition, Calvin's description of his conversion showed that he changed his academic interests from classical literature to theology. His commitment to the reform movement indicated that he was willing to forsake all for the gospel.

Another key issue relating to Calvin's conversion and flight from Paris was Nicholas Cop's inaugural speech as rector of the University of Paris. Cop was a friend of Calvin, and the speech indicated an adherence to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. There exists a handwritten portion of this speech extant in Calvin's handwriting that would seem to indicate that Calvin was the author. Cottret admits that there is no way to know for sure, but he speculates that Calvin probably helped to write it or at least had a significant influence on Cop. Why else would Calvin have fled the city after the address?

The author goes on to note that Calvin did not convert to "Protestantism." The term "Protestant" was not part of Calvin's vocabulary. Calvin, rather, saw himself as a believer and lover of Christ. However, once he made the move to leave the Roman church, there was no turning back.

After his flight from Paris, Calvin took refuge at the family of his friend, Louis du Tillet, who ultimately remained in the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. The significance of Calvin's excursion to the home of the du Tillet family was his use of their extensive library. Cottret notes that the beginnings of the *Institutes* can be traced to Calvin's brief exile in Angoulême.

Cottret includes a helpful discussion of one of Calvin's early works, his *Psychopannycha* (1534), that has been ignored by most biographers. In this early treatise, Calvin attacked the Anabaptist notion of soul sleep between death and the resurrection. This was an argument that Calvin probably developed during his "sabbatical" in Angoulême. It is noteworthy here that Calvin was arguing against the Anabaptists rather than against the Roman Catholic Church.

The author continues by detailing Calvin's move to Basel where he published the first edition of the *Institutes*. Cottret contrasts Calvin's use of the term "Institutes" with the word "summa" used to describe the theological expositions of Aquinas and other great medieval theologians. For Calvin, the institutes were a form of pedagogical instruction in parallel to Quintillian's *Institutes of Oratory*.

Cottret narrates Calvin's call to Geneva through the agency of Guillaume Farel. After his three-year exile to Strasbourg and the famous response to bishop Sadoletto, the Genevan council asked Calvin to return. To say the least, Calvin was reluctant to go back and portrayed his return to Geneva to Jonah going to Nineveh. Cottret provides an excellent summary of Calvin's ministry, the nature of Genevan government, and the role of the Consistory in regulating the morality of the inhabitants.

The author does not sidestep the more controversial aspects of Calvin's life in Geneva. Cottret is critical of Calvin's role in the Servetus trial and execution. From a twentieth-century perspective, it is easy to condemn our early modern forbears for their lack of religious tolerance and for their brutality in condemning heterodoxy.

Cottret includes his discussion of the Castellio banishment in his section on religious heresy. Castellio, however, was not a heretic. His sin was to interpret the *Song of Solomon* literally as a love poem between Solomon and one of his wives rather than as an allegory of the relationship between Christ and the Church. He was banished from Geneva because he lost his temper at a meeting of the Company of Pastors and insulted Calvin publicly. This was obviously a mistake, and it took Castellio years to find a suitable position commensurate with his training. Castellio got his revenge by publishing his seminal work *Whether Heretics Ought to be Persecuted* in which he criticized Calvin for his role in the Servetus affair and heralded the development of religious toleration in the eighteenth century.

The author has provided a helpful bibliography and index. He also includes several invaluable appendices as follows: (1) a chronology of Calvin's youth; (2) a description of the university system in France; (3) a description of the function and role of the small council in Geneva; (4) a chronology of the establishment of Protestantism in France; (5) a chronology of royal repression of Protestantism in France; (6) a list of the theological decrees of the Sorbonne in 1543; and (7) a listing of Calvin's sermons. I highly recommend this book as a good introduction to Calvin's life and thought. It is a valuable addition to the literature in English on this foundational figure of Protestant thought and practice.

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The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology. By Peter A. Lillback. Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001, 331 pp., \$24.99 paper.

The covenant relationship between God and man lies at the very heart of the Christian faith. The concept of the covenant was a major issue in the Reformation and the post-Reformation eras and has also been the subject of significant debate among historians. Peter Lillback enters into the fray by tracing the development of the covenant theme in theology with a special focus on Calvin and his successors. The author places Calvin's view of the covenant in the context of the relationship between Reformation and post-Reformation theology. He dispels the arguments of scholars who point to discontinuity between Calvin and his successors on the subject. For example, he points out that Perry Miller, the famed scholar of American Puritanism, as well as dispensationalist theologians such as Charles Ryrie, have argued that Calvin had virtually no theology of the covenant. Such scholars have followed the theory that it was post-Reformation figures such as Johannes Cocceius who developed a full-blown covenant theology. Part of the reason that many scholars have assumed that Calvin did not have

a developed covenant theology was his emphasis upon the doctrine of predestination. They asked, how could there be a covenant that man could break if God's call to election is unchangeable?

Lillback also traces other perspectives of Calvin's view of the covenant, from those like George Marsden who argue that Calvin made some mention of it to those like Lyle Bierma who say that it was a prominent theme in Calvin's thought. Bierma argues that the connection between Calvin and the federal theologians is one of teacher and pupil, whereby Olivianus developed the idea of the covenant more fully than did Calvin and made it an integral part of Reformed theology. In either case, most scholars have admitted some level of differences between Calvin and the so-called "federal" theologians of the seventeenth century.

Lillback traces the development of the covenant theme from the beginnings of the Reformation and places Calvin squarely within the context of the history of covenant theology. He argues that the covenant was an integral aspect of Calvin's entire theological system. Since Calvin studied law on the graduate level, he was well acquainted with the feudal concept of the covenant. Furthermore, as one who was self-taught in theology, Calvin was also aware of the medieval theological concept of the covenant as it related to the sacraments, justification, and anthropology. According to the author, Calvin sees the importance of the covenant to be the "binding of God in sovereign self-humiliation with men, who are in turn bound to perform their duties of faith and obedience toward him."

Lillback analyzes Calvin's use of the covenant theme throughout the Genevan Reformer's writings with special attention to the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*. In this edition, Calvin used the Latin term for covenant (*pactum*) and related cognates a total of 35 times and used the synonym *feodus* and cognates 154 times. He employed the word *testamentum* 84 times. In contrast, Calvin used the term *Trinitatis* only 26 times and the word *praedestinatio* 78 times. Calvin did make more extensive use of the term *electio* by using it 327 times. Granted, the number of times a word is used does not necessarily equate to the emphasis given to a particular doctrine or idea, but it does indicate that Calvin made significant use of the concept of the covenant.

Lillback argues in favor of continuity between Calvin and the federal theologians, especially Heinrich Bullinger. In fact, he asserts that there was very little difference between the two theologians on the subject. Both viewed the covenant as one and eternal. They both argued that the establishment of the covenant began with Adam and became more defined through the process of progressive revelation. The covenant with Abraham has special importance because of its specificity, but it was not a new covenant. It established a basis for a relationship with God that applies to the Christian even today. Both Calvin and Bullinger argued for essential continuity of the covenant between the OT and the NT. Here, they countered the arguments of the Anabaptists and accused them of rendering the OT Hebrews as mere beasts who benefited from the covenant only in this life. Furthermore, to deny infant baptism was to deny both the covenant relationship with God and the continuity between the testaments.

Calvin agreed with Bullinger regarding the mutuality and conditionality of the covenant. The first part of the covenant was a declaration of God's love for his people, which resulted in a happy life. The concept of mutuality requires that there be two parties to the contract and that both sides have to fulfill certain requirements. Conditionality spells out the specifics of such responsibilities. God promises to be our God and to fulfill his promises. The second part of the covenant called for holy living as a response. There is obviously no chance that God will not keep his end of the bargain, but it is inevitable that man will break his side.

Lillback also argues in favor of continuity between Calvin and his Rhineland successors on the issue of the prelapsarian covenant of works. Calvin argued that in such

a covenant, God offered universal salvation to those who persisted in original obedience. Adam failed in fulfilling the Law, and Christ came as its final fulfillment. For Adam, the tree in the Garden of Eden was the sign of the covenant. The author points out that the reward for obedience was still gracious on God's part because he was under no obligation to offer salvation for obedience. Lillback admits that Calvin's notion of the pre-fall covenant of works was not a fully developed doctrine, but it did prepare the way for Calvin's successors to develop the concept more fully.

This is a solid study based on a wide reading of primary sources and a thorough knowledge of the major literature in the field. It is an original work that supports the general tenets of the so-called "Muller thesis" of Calvin Seminary professor Richard Muller, who argues in favor of essential continuity between Calvin and his successors. My only criticism is the excessive use of lengthy quotations from the primary sources in the body of the text. Virtually every page has such extensive citations, which break up the prose, and make the book a bit difficult to read.

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The Federal Theology of Johannes Cocceius (1603–1669). By Willem J. van Asselt, translated by Raymond A. Blacketer. Studies in the History of Christian Thought 100. Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2001, xiv + 361 pp., \$95.00.

Professor van Asselt has produced an exceptional study in Reformed covenant theology by way of summarizing—and commending to the churches—the teaching of one of its most distinguished and prominent post-Reformation systematicians (and biblical theologians), Johannes Cocceius, one who was not well understood or appreciated in his own day. The reasons for this are many and varied. Van Asselt offers some perspective concerning this widespread misunderstanding. Most importantly, however, the author of this one-hundredth volume in Studies in the History of Christian Thought has performed an invaluable service in faithfully representing the covenant theology of Cocceius.

Though weak on American Reformed scholarship, this study will unquestionably stand the test of time. It serves well as a compendium on Reformed covenant theology in a critical period of Reformation/post-Reformation thought (more specifically) and on Reformed dogmatics (more generally). Virtually every aspect of Christian dogmatics is touched upon to one extent or another. In all essentials, Cocceius's theology embodies standard Reformed teaching, claiming nothing original in its breadth and depth of formulation. Comments van Asselt: "His work, of course, had its limitations—a fact of which he himself was well aware. Accordingly, two years before his death, he wrote to [Johann Heinrich] Heidegger in Zürich, 'All my work is unremarkable' (*Omnia mea sunt mediocra*). Such was the modesty with which Cocceius was graced" (p. 33). To the credit of our present author, he has shown discrimination and discernment in summarizing accurately so vast a theological output as that produced by Cocceius. In addition, van Asselt has mastered both the history and theology of the Reformed covenantal tradition, evident in his judicious handling of important doctrinal elements within scholastic orthodoxy.

As made crystal clear in this study, the warp and woof of Cocceius's covenant theology is the traditional Protestant Law/Gospel antithesis, what van Asselt identifies as "the hub upon which the whole wheel of dogmatics turns" (p. 1). Unquestionably, the Law/Gospel contrast is the central plank in Protestant-Reformed theology, especially in the doctrine of the covenant(s), the *principium* of Cocceius's theology (p. 143). At the

same time, van Asselt rightly points out that this theological interpretation of the Bible is decidedly practical and devotional in orientation (which may explain, in part, the appeal of covenant theology to the English Puritans and the Dutch precisionists): "Above all, the interpretation of the Scripture is to be undertaken by and for the Church. For this reason, there must not be an absolute separation between exegesis and proclamation" (p. 134). There are, observes van Asselt, "two factors to which we must pay attention in our analysis of Cocceius' theological method. The first is the doctrine of the covenant and the pinnacle or crown, the epitome, and the goal of the whole of the theological enterprise (*totius theologiae apex, consummatio et finis*); the second is the concept of the twofold knowledge of God. These two aspects are the two factors which together characterize the structure of Cocceius' theology. Essential for the interpretation of Cocceius' theology is the role that the interpreter assigns to each of these factors in elucidating Cocceius' theological system" (p. 143).

We begin by commenting briefly on Cocceius's doctrine of the knowledge of God in relation to the divine covenants. The idea of covenant as relationship with God (though broken by virtue of the sin of our first parents in the Garden of Eden) is innate. All humankind has some sense of and longing for relationship with God (p. 39, cf. p. 151; see also the discussion of Jürgen Moltmann's analysis of the concept of *amicitia* in Cocceius's theology, 311–12). One of the unsettled, contentious questions relating to Cocceius's thought is the matter of the relation between theology and (Cartesian) philosophy, more specifically, the place of natural theology in his dogmatics. (This is perhaps the least satisfying section of van Asselt's presentation, in that it leaves the reader with many unanswered questions, especially with regard to Cocceius's use of the "proofs" for the existence of God. Among other things, this reviewer would like to have seen some interaction with the incisive critique of the traditional proofs found in the work of the American-Dutch theologian Cornelius Van Til.) Van Asselt states that "natural knowledge of God and revelation are not mutually exclusive; they complement each other" (p. 69), without ever defining precisely what he means by the term "natural revelation" or "natural theology." There is a right and a wrong interpretation and employment of such revelation from God. In the first place, we do recognize that there are those truths that God has implanted within the human heart, truths which are universally suppressed in unrighteousness, to one degree or another. But secondly, these remnants of truth—what constitutes, in part, the grounds for human accountability and obedience to God—are never the *source* of theology, simply because they are insufficient and unreliable in the repristination of divine revelation (including redemptive revelation now necessary for our salvation). Concerning the views of Cocceius, van Asselt concedes: "The real truth about salvation must be drawn from the word of revelation. Reason (*ratio*), therefore, cannot be the *principium fidei*" (p. 69). He ends this section on the knowledge of God by asserting: "[Cocceius's] 'epistemology' has a theological purpose, but he also includes Christology in this discussion; nor is the pneumatological element lacking from the mix. Without the love and fear of the Lord, which are bestowed by the Holy Spirit, none of the areas of theology can be properly studied" (p. 71). The reader is still left with a number of unanswered questions. It is not sufficient to say that "external factors brought Cocceianism and Cartesianism together" (p. 83)? Why did Cocceius resort to its use? Nor is it an adequate or compelling reason to conclude that "there were common enemies to be fought, and thus the two systems were, so to speak, driven into an alliance" (p. 83). I would agree with van Asselt, in any case, that the question of the relationship between philosophy and theology in Cocceius's thought is not finally answered by reference to the larger issue of the relationship between Protestant-Reformed orthodoxy and scholasticism (viewed as a theological methodology). One can employ the scholastic method without confounding speculative natural theology and revealed theology.

Just a further word on hermeneutics: van Asselt notes that “there is in fact a certain amount of tension in the *Summa Theologia* between these two aspects [what we would call the biblical-theological and the systematic], particularly in the doctrine of God and the divine attributes; but considered as a whole, the perspective of salvation history is not obscured by Cocceius’ complementary use of the loci method” (p. 61). What faced Cocceius in his interpretation of Scripture, written for the benefit of the Church, is true for every theologian, past and present. Whatever “tensions” exist between the two disciplines—biblical theology and systematics—they are not insuperable, nor are they to be avoided at all cost. The two interpretive approaches to the Word are genuinely complementary; more than that, the one impacts the other, and that reciprocally. Christian theology must necessarily employ both approaches, each of which are found in the Bible itself. Lastly, “systematic theology for Cocceius means reflection upon the results of exegesis” (p. 139). The point to be made here is that exegesis *requires* of the interpreter that he or she give adequate attention to both the history of redemption (with special attention to the single, unifying covenant of grace spanning the entire period of redemptive history, from the fall to the return of Christ) and doctrinal systematization (emphasizing the unity of biblical teaching). One other regret in this regard is that van Asselt did not interact more substantially with the work of Geerhardus Vos, a modern-day exponent of Cocceian biblical theology.

Returning to what is the pivotal doctrine in Cocceius’s theology, namely, the doctrine of the covenants, I begin with the prelapsarian covenant of works. Nothing out of mainstream federal thinking is to be found here, with the exception of Cocceius’s doctrine of the progressive abrogation of the covenant of works in the course of redemptive history. Even here, Cocceius’s views—with some additional clarification and nuancing—have much in their favor. The climax of the covenant of grace, to be sure, is the atoning work of Christ, which fulfills all righteousness for the sake of God’s elect. “Briefly stated, this doctrine depicts five stages (*gradus*) through which God leads humanity to eternal life, and in which the consequences of the violation of the covenant of works through sin are gradually nullified” (p. 271). Van Asselt urges the churches to reclaim Cocceius’s federal interpretation of the Bible—and for that (in most respects) we are very thankful, given the posture now assumed by many contemporary theologians in their forthright repudiation of the teaching of classic federalism. Van Asselt argues (inconsistently throughout the book) that “from the very beginning the relationship of God with humanity is viewed in the light of the covenant (of works). By virtue of creation, and as the bearer of the image of God, primordial humanity is inclined toward a covenantal relationship with God” (p. 58). Later he explains: “The covenant of work does not follow automatically from creation. Humanity is created *for* a covenantal relationship, but does not immediately stand in this relationship. . . . It is not a natural ‘given’ with creation, but rather a ‘second miracle of the love of God,’ the first being the act of creation itself. In their created being as such, human persons do not have, by virtue of creation, any claim to the enjoyment of the blessed friendship of God. On the other hand, we must think that Cocceius sees two states of humanity before the fall into sin: first a natural state, followed by a covenantal state. Cocceius’ concept of the covenant of works avoids both of these two extremes: that of identifying creation and the covenant of works, and that of positing a duality of creation and covenant” (pp. 259–60). He adds: “The relationship of peace and friendship with God, however, is not simply part and parcel of the divine-human relationship that exists by virtue of creation. Instead, such friendship is a gift of God’s goodness (*bonitas Dei*) above and beyond that mere Creator-creature relationship” (p. 268).

Following Cocceius and the scholastic federal tradition, van Asselt mistakenly views all God’s works in creation and recreation in terms of divine grace—“grace” in the broadest, non-soteric sense (more on this below). More significant and crucial, how-

ever, is the emphasis upon Law as *legal demand*, first set forth in the original covenant with Adam as federal head. Nothing could be more important in biblical theology than the acknowledgment of the biblical distinction between the Law and the Gospel of free grace in Christ Jesus, mediator of the covenant of grace. The demand for perfect, personal obedience is foundational for understanding humanity made in the image of God and Christ as reconciler between God and humankind (the doctrine of substitutionary atonement). Succinctly stated, Law “rewards obedience.” In (soteric) justification, Christ’s obedience is the *meritorious grounds of life and salvation* (p. 220): “The character of the eternal pact (and of the covenant of works) is thus one of obligation, not of grace, as is the case in the covenant of grace. The eternal pact is a description of the legal position of Christ as Sponsor, just as the covenant of works describes the legal position of humanity in the state of rectitude. The parallel between Christ and Adam, as first and second Adam, finds its origin here” (p. 242; note the different reference in van Asselt’s use of the term “grace” in this context, one that contemplates *redemptive* provision).

One nagging issue in Reformed federalism, already alluded to above, is the (commonplace) misapplication of the biblical term “grace” to the pre-fall epoch. Here, once again, van Asselt is thoroughly inconsistent in his own analysis and critique of Cocceius’s teaching, which is representative of federal theology as a whole. In this connection also it is highly misleading to speak of “salvation” prior to the fall. Underlying all this discussion is van Asselt’s reluctance to identify the legal demand of the covenant of works as “meritorious.” On this point of doctrine van Asselt is thoroughly inconsistent in his argumentation. Another related issue requiring further reflection (and reformulation) in this book is the role of the Spirit of God in both the creation and recreation epochs and in the old and new covenants. Our author is not entirely clear in expounding upon the similarities and differences of the Spirit’s working in the creation/recreation epochs and in the two economies of redemption, the old and the new. In addition, van Asselt mistakenly restricts the mediatorial role of the second person of the Trinity to the provisions of redemption. The Son is not seen as mediator of the covenant between God and man established at creation. (Of course, there is no need before the fall for the messianic ministry of the Son of God with respect to the accomplishment of humanity’s redemption from sin.)

One of the appendices takes up the question of the origins of the doctrine of the covenant of works. Though brief, it is extremely well stated and well answered. In van Asselt’s opinion (with which I am in full agreement), federalism is a later maturation of early covenant theology, the latter development standing in continuity with the preceding period of doctrinal formulation. Essentially what we have in the Reformation/post-Reformation age are not two divergent streams, but rather two *convergent* streams of covenantal thinking, each bearing all the essential elements necessary for the exposition of the doctrine of the covenant of works. In sharp contrast to the thesis advanced by Peter Lillback, our present author rightly assesses Calvin’s place in the history of covenant theology. Far from being the first (serious) attempt to evaluate Calvin’s teaching, Lillback’s study, *The Binding of God: Calvin’s Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001), falsely aligns Calvin’s doctrine of the covenant with the teaching of medieval voluntarism, specifically, the nominalist doctrine of congruent merit, and in so doing dissolves the Law/Gospel antithesis so crucial in Calvin’s thought and those in his theological tradition. For further analysis of the teachings of Reformed theology, see my *Covenant Theology in Reformed Perspective: Collected Essays and Book Reviews in Historical, Biblical, and Systematic Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000).

Many other facets of Reformed doctrine—restated by Cocceius in his writings—could be accented in this book review, such as the origins of the biblical doctrine of

eschatology in the creation account (surprisingly, van Asselt omits explicit mention of the doctrine of probation, an important element in a mature statement of the doctrine of the covenants), typological interpretation of the Bible as a distinguishing feature of covenant theology, the relationship between the covenant and the decrees of God (including double predestination, seen as a process of differentiation between the elect and probing in the gradual unfolding of history), and developments among later disciples of Cocceius (wherein a psychologizing of salvation history in the doctrine of the Christian life surfaces in some Calvinistic quarters, for example, in English Puritanism and Dutch precisionism, schools of pietistic federalism). Reformed covenant theology stands as a persuasive and convincing alternative to the Lutheran tradition that has no comprehensive doctrine of the covenants (or doctrine of eschatology rooted in the biblical account of creation). Van Asselt concludes his treatment with the following remarks: "Cocceius is a wonderful friend and companion for any one seeking a deeper spiritual life at the heart of the Church and world. He lived his life of teaching, preaching, and writing, not from his own empty resources but from the well-spring of the Holy Spirit: he discovered that the most beautiful thing that can happen, is to be called a Christian and that the rights and the duties entailed by this name are a magnificent thing. For a Christian is ultimately . . . a friend of Christ" (p. 321). Finally: "It is thus no exaggeration to say that the study of Cocceian theology in relation to the rest of Reformed theology and piety still remains an underdeveloped area. A detailed study, oriented toward the history of doctrine, should be able to shed some light on these matters, as well as on the more important question of how the students of Cocceius within the Reformed tradition differed among each other, and who were the closest in their thinking to Cocceius himself" (p. 339).

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The Sermons of Jonathan Edwards: A Reader. By Wilson H. Kimnach, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Douglas A. Sweeney, eds. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999, xlvii + 281 pp., \$17.00 paper.

Two to three times a week Jonathan Edwards composed and preached sermons. Surprisingly, his pastoral orations have received relatively little scholarly attention. *Sermons* is an innovative and successful effort that situates Edwards in his primary vocation as parish minister. Edited by Wilson H. Kimnach, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Douglas A. Sweeney, this anthology makes available five previously unpublished sermons and is structured to reflect the "pilgrimage of the soul," or the maturation of the spiritual life, themes on which Edwards often preached. The utility of this approach, according to the editors, "recognizes the crucial role of the sermon in the life and art of Jonathan Edwards, and is intended as an aid to understanding Edwards as a preacher, sermon writer, and pastoral theologian" (p. x).

In the first selection, "The Way of Holiness," Edwards seeks to guide the saint in the progression of grace. Edwards encourages active spirituality and the pursuit of holiness by self-examination and contemplation of God's "otherness." Holiness, to Edwards, "[t]is the highest beauty and amiableness, vastly above all other beauties" (p. 12).

In another early sermon, "The Pleasantness of Religion," Edwards reminds his congregation that with religion the "sweetness" of earthly delights is enhanced. While heaven may be a beautiful and pleasant place, Edwards argues that things of this world may be enjoyed only when the conscience is clear. "It would be worth the while to be religious," Edwards repeats continually throughout the sermon, "if it were only for the pleasantness of it" (p. 15).

In another early sermon (in fact, Edwards's first publication), "God Glorified in the Work of Redemption," he unashamedly defends a Calvinist soteriology. Fearful of encroaching Arminianism, Edwards expounds on the sufficiency of God, a theological construct he deemed necessary and vital to the life of faith.

Previously unpublished, "The Reality of Conversion" explores the implications of the salvation experience. Even though Edwards says individuals "can't be changed but by a supernatural work of the Creator upon them," he admonishes his parishioners to strive for holiness and seek diligently the eternal and heavenly destiny of their souls.

Edwards explores the themes of reason and religious knowledge in "The Importance and Advantage of a Thorough Knowledge of Divine Truth." While "spiritual knowledge" is far superior to "speculative knowledge" according to Edwards, the latter is necessary for the former to be useful. This sermon demonstrates Edwards's keen ability to marshal abstract theology into language his congregation could understand.

In "A Divine and Supernatural Light," Edwards reminds those under grace that the "spiritual light" they possess came from God and that it is "rational" to believe this doctrine. For Edwards, unlike "divine and supernatural light," simple reason cannot "convey the excellency in divine things" (p. 134). Rather, Edwards contends, only by the illumination of the Holy Spirit will the saint possess a "spiritual sense" of things.

Also previously unpublished, "He That Believeth Shall Be Saved" is one of Edwards's simpler presentations of the Christian gospel. In this sermon, delivered in 1751, Edwards lays out basic Christian doctrine for the Stockbridge Indians. Edwards explains to his audience what "is meant by believing in Christ," how faith in Christ "is the only way to be saved by Christ," and why damnation awaits the unfaithful. Finally, Edwards admonishes the Stockbridge Indians to examine themselves for "true faith." Similar to another unpublished sermon preached to the Mohawks in 1751, Edwards's sermons to the Indians are typified by brevity and simplicity in elocution in order to make interpretation easier.

In another previously unpublished sermon, "I Know My Redeemer Lives," Edwards points to the OT prophet Job as one who, despite trying circumstances, was comforted because of his knowledge of salvation. This knowledge, Edwards maintains, "actually and infallibly give[s] comfort and rejoicing in all circumstances" (p. 147).

Also previously unpublished, "Much in the Deeds of Charity" calls the saint to serve his or her neighbor in order to "have spiritual discoveries" (p. 198). Despite his admonition to continue in good works, Edwards is quick to point out that charitable deeds do not merit salvation. Spiritual knowledge is given as a reward for good works "done from right principles," but Edwards reminds his congregation that "the blessing of a spiritual discovery and manifestation of God to the soul is infinitely too great to be purchased by anything we have to give" (p. 202).

In "The Excellency of Christ," Edwards attempts to explain his Savior's excellency through paradox. Some of the "admirable conjunction[s] of diverse excellencies" that Edwards finds in Christ are "infinite highness" and "low condescension," "infinite justice" and "infinite grace," "infinite majesty" and "transcendent meekness," "deepest reverence towards God" and "equality with God," an "absolute sovereignty" and "perfect resignation." Edwards implores his hearers to consider these "diverse excellencies" in order to "accept of him, and close with him as your Savior" (p. 184).

Also included are the sermons "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," "A Farewell Sermon," and "Heaven is a World of Love," the latter from Edwards's famous sermon series "Charity and Its Fruits." No Edwards sermon reader would be complete without "Sinners," the editors point out, and "A Farewell Sermon" reveals a bitter Edwards reminding his estranged congregation that future judgment awaits them for dismissing their pastor.

Sermons accomplishes what it sets out to do. The selections perceptively mirror the "pilgrimage of the soul," often at the fore of Edwards's mind, and implicitly attest to

the evolution of his pastoral theology, beginning in 1722 when Edwards was a young nineteen-year-old minister, to 1751 when an embittered, yet seasoned parson was forced to preach to the Indians on the outskirts of Massachusetts.

Unlike previous anthologies of Edwards, this sermon reader helps to uncover some of Edwards's exegetical and hermeneutical innovation and brilliance. The full gravity of Edwards's sermon theology, however, comes only when this collection is read alongside Helen Westra's fascinating articles on Edwards's sermons, her penetrating book-length study *The Minister's Task and Calling in the Sermons of Jonathan Edwards* (Edwin Mellen, 1986), and the three authoritative Yale sermon volumes (10, 14, and 18), edited by Wilson H. Kimnach, Kenneth P. Minkema, and Mark Valeri, respectively (three more sermon volumes are scheduled for publication). In the final analysis, *Sermons* does a great service in presenting critically the weekly admonitions of one of America's most controversial, illuminating, and brilliant pastor-theologians.

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The Kingdom and the Power: The Theology of Jürgen Moltmann. By Geiko Müller-Fahrenholz. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001, 262 pp., \$15.00 paper.

Those who are interested in an intelligent overview of Jürgen Moltmann's major works will find Müller-Fahrenholz's book readable and informative. Moltmann is recognized as one of the most important German-speaking theologians in the field of systematic theology since World War II. Retired from the University of Tübingen in 1994, Moltmann is a prolific author, having written extensively over five hundred published titles by 1985. In 1999, Moltmann published *Experiences in Theology* as a concluding work to his six-volume "Contributions to Systematic Theology." The completion of this six-volume work makes it possible for Müller-Fahrenholz, a former student of Moltmann and now a minister of the United Lutheran Church of Germany, to produce a full-range presentation of Moltmann's lifework delineating the basic themes and motifs that can be found in those writings. The book is intended to serve as an aid to reading Moltmann's writings. The author's aim is simply to "sketch out the personal, ecumenical, and political background to Moltmann's books" (p. 11). He makes it clear that the book is not meant to be a vigorous critique of Moltmann's theology.

The book consists of fourteen chapters but is not divided into parts or sections. Such an unskillful arrangement of the table of contents does not give readers an idea as to how the book will develop and progress. In fact, the book could have been conveniently divided into two parts, as its content vividly demonstrates. The first part deals with Moltmann's three great "programmatic writings" from the years 1964 to 1975: *Theology of Hope* (1964), *The Crucified God* (1972), and *The Church in the Power of the Spirit* (1975). These writings are termed "programmatic" because Moltmann intends to set forth his socialist ideology as the political liberation of humanity from disparity, inequity and marginalization. Liberation theology forms the nucleus of these writings. The second part deals with the six volumes of Moltmann's "Contributions to Systematic Theology" that appeared from 1980 to 1999. They are *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God* (1980), *God in Creation* (1985), *The Way of Jesus Christ* (1989), *The Spirit of Life* (1991), *The Coming of God* (1995), and *Experiences in Theology* (1999). Moltmann purposely uses the word "contributions" because he is acutely aware of the limitations and particularity of his theological position. He makes no claim to cover the whole spectrum of theology. He admits the experimental and fragmentary nature of this theological endeavor, which sprang from his curiosity and imagination for the kingdom of God.

Müller-Fahrenholz basically devotes one chapter to each of Moltmann's nine major works, employing his own thematic outline to summarize the basic content and offer a brief critique of each book. The major thrust of Moltmann's three programmatic writings is that God's history of promise permeates and renews the histories of humanity and of the world. Such is the eschatological hope that God has promised to us (*Theology of Hope*). The suffering God breaks the "vicious circles of death and oppression" by being crucified on the cross. Such pathos of God calls for a political hermeneutic that is characterized by socialism (*The Crucified God*). The Church experiences its life and its mission through the liberating power of the divine spirit (*The Church in the Power of the Spirit*). After sketching the basic contents of these books, Müller-Fahrenholz laments that Moltmann has not satisfactorily or adequately dealt with the salient issue of the ethics of hope, particularly in the areas of economics, politics, and culture.

According to the author, the liberation theology conference held in Mexico City in 1977 was the critical turning point for Moltmann's theological career. There he was forced to rethink his own cultural and historical context and his own commitment to liberation theology amidst the group of third world theologians who found it increasingly difficult to accept him as a comparable partner. With great disappointment, Moltmann had to be honest with himself and accept his own role as part of the "white" first world. He had to "learn what liberation theology could look like in the midst of the conditions of the First World" (p. 124). For this reason, he deliberately undertook the task of writing the six-volume contributions to the classical systematics with "hope" and "liberation" as the major motifs. The volumes address the doctrine of God (*The Trinity and the Kingdom of God*), the doctrine of creation (*God in Creation*), Christology (*The Way of Jesus Christ*), pneumatology (*The Spirit of Life*), and eschatology (*The Coming of God*), concluding with a discussion on theological method (*Experiences in Theology*).

Will the church in Germany benefit from Moltmann's works and find them relevant today? The author's answer to this question is very definite. When commenting on Moltmann's treatment of the *ordo salutis* in the book *Spirit of Life*, Müller-Fahrenholz expresses the dire need for such teaching in today's church: "At least in Germany the churches have become so afraid that they no longer feel able to address the claim of salvation to human life and to a healthy communal life with other people and with nature" (p. 194). It has been almost four decades since *Theology of Hope* appeared in 1964. Is Moltmann's book on hope out of date and therefore obsolete? Not so, the author responds emphatically. Facing so many dangers that threaten humanity and the planet, there is greater need today than in the 1960s to fight for the future. The pathos of *Theology of Hope* powerfully reminds us today that "where the future becomes hopeless, the present becomes merciless" (p. 61).

The Kingdom and the Power contains biographical information about Moltmann's conversion to Christianity, his family, his ecumenical involvement, and his teaching career at Tübingen. This information is helpful to readers in acquiring a fuller understanding of Moltmann's theology. One glaring weakness of the book is its typographical errors. Nobody will agree with every interpretation of Moltmann's theology presented by Müller-Fahrenholz. Evangelicals will contend (and justifiably so) with Moltmann's treatment of the Scriptures, his panentheistic interpretation of creation, his socialist view of salvation, and so on. Nevertheless, evangelicals will also appreciate Moltmann's passion for social justice and for the coming of the kingdom of God. Even more so, readers will appreciate his passionate interest in making theology relevant and creative in the historical and cultural context and his profound contributions to theological scholarship. For those who are interested in an informed overview of this theological giant's major works, I highly recommend this book.

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Christianity and the Nature of Science: A Philosophical Investigation. By J. P. Moreland. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989, 272 pp., \$14.99.

Back in print after an unfortunate hiatus, this book provides an excellent starting point for those interested in thinking Christianly about science. Its author, J. P. Moreland of Biola University's Talbot School of Theology, intends the volume "to assist and encourage Christians to think more clearly about the relationship between science and theology" (p. 12) as well as to "see that science and theology have interacted with each other and should" (p. 13). Such assistance and encouragement come via a defense of three theses: (1) no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between science and non-science; (2) science faces limits which undermine its claim to be epistemically superior to philosophy and theology; and (3) those attempting to integrate science and theology should not naively assume that science presents a true (or approximately true) account of the natural world. The defense of these theses comprises five chapters. Chapters 1–2 establish the first thesis, chapter 3 the second, and chapters 4–5 the third. A sixth chapter comprises a discussion of scientific creationism, and a short postscript concludes the discussion.

Chapter 1 argues that neither an adequate definition of science nor a satisfactory account of its necessary and sufficient conditions has been put forward. Moreover, Moreland contends, the task of finding such definitions or conditions is primarily a philosophical one. Since their professional training prepares scientists to *do* science rather than to *study* it as a discipline, such tasks go beyond their training. So too does the task of integrating science and theology that—properly understood—turns out also to be philosophical. Of course, the philosophical nature of such tasks does not preclude scientists from engaging in them; but when scientists do engage in them, they do not do so *as scientists*.

Chapter 2 concerns scientific method, the analysis of which properly falls under the purview of historians and philosophers of science. Rather than a single "scientific method," Moreland argues, there exists a family of methods that defies rigorous characterization. Since some of these methods find use in non-scientific disciplines such as theology, science cannot legitimately claim to be the *only* rational, truth-seeking discipline. In chapter 3, he argues that scientism—the view that "science is the very paradigm of truth and rationality" and what falls "outside of science is a matter of mere belief and subjective opinion" (p. 104)—is self-refuting. Advocates of scientism fail to take into account various limitations faced by science.

Chapter 4 concerns scientific realism, according to which "successful scientific theories are true or approximately true models of the theory-independent world" (p. 13). Scientific truth claims presuppose certain philosophical commitments (e.g. that there are abstract objects, that sense experience is reliable, that truth is correspondence). Given that the debate between scientific realists and their anti-realist opponents is quite complex and has many adherents on each side, Moreland maintains that one should not dogmatically maintain a realist position. In light of this, he suggests that an eclectic approach, which has one adopt realism or anti-realism on a case-by-case basis, might be the best response to the debate. Of course, no matter how one responds to it, the realist/anti-realist debate has implications for conflict between science and theology, for it shows at the very least that such conflict should not necessarily be resolved in science's favor. In chapter 5, Moreland discusses alternatives to scientific realism, including constructive empiricism, operationalism, phenomenalism, pragmatism, and the eclectic view that he himself favors. Here, he also discusses the implications of Thomas Kuhn's work for the realist/anti-realist debate.

Chapter 6 responds to various objections to counting scientific creationism as a science. Finally, a concluding postscript briefly summarizes the six preceding chapters, calls the Christian community to develop a distinctively Christian understanding of

science, and offers suggestions to facilitate its doing so (e.g. recovering a Christian understanding of vocation and allocating resources to support Christians engaged in integrating science and theology).

Not only does Moreland provide a well-written and cogently argued introduction to the nature of science, but he also provides a helpful bibliography and extensive footnotes for those who wish to pursue the discussion further. While his overall discussion of science seems well-informed, balanced, and accurate, I found his treatment of the realist/anti-realist debate to be particularly helpful. Of course, this does not mean that I find nothing here with which to disagree. For instance, I differ with Moreland about whether those who adopt his eclectic approach should assume a realist position unless they have reason to do otherwise. He holds that, when assessing a particular scientific theory, one should give the benefit of the doubt to the realist view of it; thus, "the burden of proof is on the antirealist" (p. 205). Both realists and anti-realists agree that a successful scientific theory is instrumentally useful, but the realist—unlike the anti-realist—goes on to claim that such a theory is also (approximately) true. Since the realist claims more than the anti-realist, it seems to me that *he* should bear the burden of proof. But this amounts to little more than a quibble and certainly does not dissuade me from enthusiastically recommending this book to anyone interested in the occasionally stormy relationship between science and theology.

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The Shape of Practical Theology: Empowering Ministry with Theological Praxis. By Ray S. Anderson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001, 342 pp., \$25.00 paper.

Professor of theology and ministry at Fuller Seminary, Ray Anderson has exceptional experience in both academic and practical theology. The author seeks methodologically to integrate practical and systematic theology, contending "that the traffic on the bridge connecting theory and practice now flows both ways" (p. 7). His foci lie in three areas. In Part One, he develops a theological method that integrates theory and praxis. In Part Two, his theological method of praxis is biblically defended and demonstrated through specific critical studies. Part Three is addressed to Christian leaders engaged in pastoral ministries.

Part One (chaps. 1–5) opens by reminding us that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were those who had encountered God and recounted their story for later generations. It was left to Moses to become "the first theologian" (p. 11). Anderson maintains that *theology* occurs as God joins us on our walk, "stimulating our reflection and inspiring us to recognize the living Word, as happened to the two walking on the road to Emmaus on the first Easter" (p. 12). What Jesus *does*, therefore, is as important as what he verbally communicates. His activities of healing on the Sabbath and forgiving the woman caught in adultery—as two of many examples—were designed to communicate theology. Such liberating actions, it is affirmed, are as authoritative as Jesus' teaching. Anderson cuts a path between theology that reduces to pragmatics, on the one hand, and to mere theoretical abstractions on the other. He does so, in part, by arguing that postmodernism no longer allows the separation of experience, context and theory: "the postmodern vision of reality approaches more closely the biblical view than the vision of the so-called modern period. Doing practical theology in the present culture . . . calls for critical and cautious reflection on the hermeneutics of divine revelation. To subsume divine revelation under the banner of modern thought with its claims to universal truth is outright arrogance from a theological standpoint" (p. 21).

The author centers his theological method in *Christopraxis*, “the continuing ministry of Christ through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit” (p. 29). In the biblical record of Christ’s life and his ongoing work in the Spirit, we see liberating principles that find their culmination in an eschaton of fulfilled humanity in God. Scripture is the inspired, authoritative word of God in that it launches, so to speak, theological projectiles that continue through the dynamic praxis of Christ’s present ministry by the Spirit through the Church in the world. As Jesus and Paul drew out principles that superseded older law, so the Church today should seek to apply the principles of Scripture without being necessarily bound to its specific instruction given in past historical contexts (e.g. divorce, women in ministry). “Present interpretation of Scripture must be as faithful to the eschatological reality and authority of Christ as to scriptural reality and authority” (p. 37). Theological method, therefore, is a dynamic process of applying eschatological ideals within the mission of the Church, as also informed by critical dialogue with secular sources of knowledge. Oriented by Scripture, we may trust the presence of the resurrected Christ through the Spirit to empower our ministry decisions. This is seen as a Trinitarian and truly Pentecostal theology. Thus, the present missiological activity of the Church generates practical (hence systematic) theology.

Part Two (chaps. 6–11) elaborates “The Praxis of Practical Theology.” Anderson believes the resurrection of Christ is an ongoing hermeneutical principle. Seen in Paul’s Damascus Road experience, there is continuity between the pre- and post-resurrection activity of Jesus as he continues working from the apostles through today. Admitting there is no easy methodological formula, the author seeks to hold the tension between biblical authority, the present working of Christ, and the “not-yet” expectation of the eschaton. Paralleling Moltmann, he contends that the “last century” should have priority over the “first century” in terms of normativity for our day: “The Spirit comes to the church out of the future” (p. 105). Is this to say that any new theology or anyone claiming the Spirit has final authority? Anderson responds negatively: “As nearly as I can see, for every case in which eschatological preference was exercised by the Spirit in the New Testament church, there was a biblical antecedent for what appeared to be revolutionary and new” (p. 109). Such antecedents would permit, for example, the ordination of women but not of practicing homosexuals. Anderson concludes that as the Church capacitated by the Spirit assumes its diaconal ministry in the world, it is actually “doing the truth, not merely applying the truth” (p. 127). A methodology of signs and wonders, he adds, does not grasp the holistic nature of the mission of the Church.

Part Two continues by exploring Barth’s concept of the “humanization of humanity” based on the “humanness of God” in the incarnation. This, Anderson alleges, is the proper perspective for the individual and the Church regarding one’s neighbor, ethics and social engagement. Thus, evangelism “might better address the core social structures rather than attempting to alter the individual’s self-perception through the mind alone” (p. 177). True conversion should evidence the reality of Christ in terms of existing cultural and social patterns instead of imposing foreign criteria. The section ends by suggesting social repentance by the Church when it has sought to preserve institutions rather than administer divine grace.

Part Three (chaps. 12–20) addresses pastoral roles in light of the author’s theological method. Anderson reaffirms that practical theology is *paraclesis* (chap. 12), based not so much on historical links as the current ministry of Christ in the Spirit in Word-events (“agogic moments,” p. 198). Discussing pastoral care as “moral advocacy” (chap. 13), Anderson becomes more forceful in his insistence that “the Bible will not permit us to absolutize any design, even a design or order that has its roots in God’s created world” (e.g. sabbath, marriage; p. 217). Rather “God’s moral will is directed toward the goal of human life” (p. 219). The role of the caregiver is to affirm a person’s own moral

freedom to become whole. Chapter 14 sets forth the kingdom of God as a therapeutic culture that takes form in world culture. It is "not primarily a religious culture but a power that liberates and frees persons within their existing culture to experience the 'human' culture that belongs by right of God's creation to each person" (p. 234). A Christian therapist will know that she or he needs a living community both as a context for healing as well as to which to be accountable. Nevertheless, the kingdom of God is also eschatological, presenting "the future as advent, as a reality that is coming into the present" (p. 249). Regarding "The Church's Mission to the Family in a Postmodern Culture" (chap. 15), Anderson notes that Western concepts of family may not be adequate in light of OT patriarchy and NT community: "family" is taken in the broader sense of familial community. "One culture is not relativized to another culture, as has often tragically happened in the missionary expansion of the church" (p. 254). Furthermore, "there is no single cultural form of family that carries the moral authority by which all others can be judged" (p. 258). Although Anderson is surely seeking to create space for America's disheveled "family" structures, one might ask if he really considers Islam's four wives, a chieftain's harem, or a gay marriage as equally viable alternatives so long as they humanize? Is the biblical norm so ambiguous? Anderson's exposition on "Homosexuality" (chap. 16) is a biblical study that conservatives will find comforting, but critics on the other side may find the arguments ill-connected to the less rigorous exegesis in much of what has gone before. In Chapter 17 the author addresses "clergy burnout," his own pilgrimage and Christopraxis being instructive for all those in ministry. Anderson's presentation of forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing (chap. 18) wends nicely through this pastoral thicket. Chapter 19 deals briefly with the problem of suffering. The book concludes with a "Memo for Theological Educators" (chap. 20). For Anderson, Peter and James reflect a mentality of "establishment" religion, juxtapositioned to Paul's pentecostal faith. He goes on to warn that "Christian tradition is misunderstood and misused if it becomes institutionalized and loses its cumulative and liberating function within the praxis of the Spirit" (p. 320). In this context he speaks of the acute tension divinity schools face between academic demands and spiritual effectiveness. He proposes a praxis-based curriculum based on mission outcome rather than traditional academic divisions.

There is much to consider in *The Shape of Practical Theology*, as all Christians struggle to understand and obey both Word and Spirit. Anderson asks many of the hard questions as he articulates and defends his theological method. Many pages warm the heart.

Anderson's orientation is at once evangelical, Barthian and ecumenical. In the North American sense, Anderson is *evangelical* in that he "upholds the full authority and objectivity of the divine Word as written in holy Scripture but only because Scripture itself is contingent on the being of God as given to us through the incarnate Word" (p. 53). The author rightly warns against the "idolatry" of objectifying truth "detached from God's being" where truth is comprehended "in categories more susceptible to our control" (pp. 53–54). However, while leaning against the subjectivism of imaging God to our own liking, Anderson in my judgment does not escape importing a politically correct agenda and defining Christopraxis in ways that sound very nice to postmodern ears. Timid readers need not fear—no John the Baptist here. For Anderson the Bible is authoritative primarily in the sense that it launches a trajectory of divine activity. The devil is in its details.

The work is also *Barthian*, especially in Part Two, with much to be appreciated about real experience with the living God. (Bonhoeffer and T. F. Torrance are the other most referenced writers.) Barth's conceptualities permeate Anderson's thought as seen in the Word in the word, the humanity of God, the Son's advocacy for the world, his theological framework for social ethics, etc. Because Moltmann, Gunton and other

contemporary Trinitarians also appear, it may surprise some that Anderson's Trinitarianism seems less than full-blown, not unlike that of the Swiss master. The Spirit is defined as "the revelation to us of the inner being of God as constituted by the relations between Father and Son" (p. 40). We are left wondering in what sense the Holy Spirit is the "other comforter." While the work's "trinitarian" methodology has potential, I suspect contemporary readers will find it disappointing.

Finally, Anderson's theology is *ecumenical* in that assumptions regarding the eschatological ideal—and therefore the guiding NT principles that orient praxis today—are unanimously oriented to human welfare ("in Christ"). Surely God does love the world and we await the new earth. But while divine self-giving is repeatedly affirmed by Anderson, almost nothing is mentioned of God's glory, holiness or judgment. In this the author joins a rather large chorus (many quoted throughout). But the "why" of prioritizing some biblical activities and texts over others seems culture-bound to the author's own theological preferences. His use of certain proof-texts while eschewing others rings strange. For example, the author's declawed eschatology with little if any judgment at all stands in contrast to classical Christian faith down through the ages—not to mention large sweeps of NT teaching. While I suppose we all err with our favored themes, Anderson's open preference for certain liberative principles will give many readers pause on other issues as well. Some will not be so confident that Anderson's theological trajectory is Christ's Spirit boldly guiding us into the future.

Still there is much to learn from Anderson's work. His theme that "every act of ministry teaches something about God" (p. 30) is exactly true. That we can indeed trust the Pentecostal power of Christ to guide us in the midst of ministerial complexities is a welcome cry. His integration of praxis into theological method and hermeneutics is a fascinating and colossal challenge. But I for one think the Church would do well to stay tethered more closely to the Word, difficult as that may be in a fast-changing world.

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The Anatomy of Preaching. By David L. Larsen. Grand Rapids: Kregel, [1989] rev. ed. 1999, 193 pp., \$11.99 paper. *A Primer for Preachers.* By Ian Pitt-Watson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986, 112 pp., \$8.99 paper. *The Dynamics of Preaching.* By Warren W. Wiersbe. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999, 173 pp., \$10.99 paper.

Three books on preaching from three master preachers make up this review. The books span the last decade of the twentieth century and in some way chronicle the development of preaching during this period.

David Larsen's *The Anatomy of Preaching* is an analysis of the role and rise of preaching and its practice in the history of the Church and today. The book was originally published in 1989 by Baker. In this revised edition, Larsen builds on his earlier work. His crisp and well-researched chapters raise questions for the reader. The titles serve as prompters for his thoughtful queries. Some of these include "Does Preaching Have a Future?" and "What is Biblical Preaching?" where he explores the past and present of preaching, stating, "where preaching thrives, the church thrives" (p. 20).

Larsen understands the nuances in preaching scholarship and deals thoughtfully with the new homiletic, tracing its influence upon modern-day preaching. Chapters addressing "Where Are We Going with Structure?," "What Makes a Sermon Flow?," and "When Shall We Preach Christ?" demonstrate Larsen's grasp of the influence of the new hermeneutic on the new homiletic. As a result, what takes place in preaching, observes

Larsen, is that "Christology seems to flatten out. There is an oppressive horizontalization in the preaching" (p. 168).

Not only does Larsen tackle the intellectual issues associated with preaching, he also deals comfortably with preaching's practical aspects. Chapters on escaping predictability, the difficulty of application, developing imagination, the challenges of conclusions, honing a personal style, and enhancing presentation balance out the book.

The late Ian Pitt-Watson's brief, helpful publication, *A Primer for Preachers*, was intended by Watson "to remind the theological student of the shattering power of the Word of God, of the destructive consequences of its misuse, but above all of the revolutionary potential of that Word to change lives and to change our world" (p. 10).

Pitt-Watson's theology of preaching seems to dominate throughout: "The Word of God comes to us in three ways: first in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh; second, in the written Word of Scripture as contained in the Old and New Testaments; but third (and this is the divine-crazy absurdity), in the Word preached" (p. 14). He maintains "it is God speaking through us who preach" (p. 14). Preaching, says Pitt-Watson "is about what 'God has done: by sending his own Son in a form like that of our own sinful nature' (Rom. 8:3). That is the gospel" (p. 21).

The book builds upon Pitt-Watson's theological presupposition. In chapters one and two he argues that the terms "biblical preaching" and "exegetical preaching" are synonymous. He maintains that systematically working through a text does not guarantee that the sermon is biblical: "No methodology can guarantee that a sermon is really biblical. That will not be determined by the sermon's form, but by its content" (p. 24).

The remainder of the book outlines the process of putting together a sermon: exegetical issues, exegesis of life, sermon organization, strategies of sermon development, and other practical issues. The final chapter returns more intentionally to theological concerns. Here, Pitt-Watson underscores the integration of God's word in the life of the preacher: "The truth we preach must be a truth not just thought, but also felt and done" (p. 98).

Pitt-Watson concludes by stating: "The whole of this book has been an attempt to describe a theology and practice of preaching appropriate to the special kind of truth of which the Bible speaks" (p. 100). Although helpful, it is not always clear what Pitt-Watson means or intends by his "three ways" that God's Word comes to us. There is a certain thickness to Pitt-Watson's writing that tends to obstruct what he means. Clarity is helpful not only in the spoken work of preaching, but in the written definition of it as well.

Warren W. Wiersbe's *The Dynamics of Preaching* is part of a series developed by Baker on "Ministry Dynamics for a New Century." Wiersbe serves as the series editor. The purpose of the series "is to provide both experienced and beginning pastors with concise information that will help them do the task of ministry with efficiency, fruitfulness, and joy" (p. 7). Further, the editor says, "the emphasis in this series is on practical service founded on basic principles and not on passing fads" (p. 7).

The book is full of practical insight into diligent, responsible, and God-devoted preaching. Wiersbe is a student of preaching. His love for the subject is communicated throughout. He examines the task of preaching, the source and focus of preaching, the connection of listeners with the text, the spiritual life of the preacher, imagination and preaching, special occasion preaching, and the book concludes with an overview of how a preacher can learn from others about the task of preaching. Admittedly a practical rather than a theoretical book, Wiersbe's work encourages pastors and even seminary students to develop a heart for preaching.

In his last chapter, Wiersbe writes: "Meeting the distinguished preachers of the past and learning how the Lord worked in and through their lives can help me better understand how God works in Christian ministry today and makes his ministers what

they ought to be" (p. 143). All three of these authors of the past decade—Larsen, Pitt-Watson, and Wiersbe—are distinguished students of preaching. From them one can learn the challenges of preaching today in the light of a great tradition.

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The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity. By Gavin D'Costa. Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000, xi + 187 pp., \$20.00 paper.

In recent years an extensive debate has emerged regarding the relationship of Christianity to other religions. Gavin D'Costa, an Indian Roman Catholic who teaches theology at the University of Bristol (England), has been an active participant in this debate. In addition to several books on religious pluralism, he has written numerous articles addressing the interface between Christianity and other religions. His most recent book, *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity*, makes several important contributions to this continuing discussion. In part one (chaps. 1–3) he critically engages pluralist interpretations of religion; in part two (chaps. 4–5) he explicates his constructive alternative.

D'Costa argues that pluralists are really covert "exclusivists" whose positions fail to provide the openness, tolerance, and equality they claim. In chap. 1 he develops this thesis through an engagement with John Hick, Paul Knitter, and Dan Cohn-Sherbok. Drawing upon the work of John Milbank and Alasdair MacIntyre, D'Costa claims that there is no such thing as a "non tradition-specific" approach to religion, and that the pluralism of these authors "represents a tradition-specific approach that bears all the same features as exclusivism—except that it is western liberal modernity's exclusivism" (p. 2). He also maintains that the exclusivist-inclusivist-pluralist typology, which has dominated recent discussion of the relationship of Christianity to other religions, obscures the exclusivity of these pluralists and should be abandoned. In chaps. 2–3 D'Costa attempts to show that two additional pluralists—Sarvapelli Radhakrishnan and the Dalai Lama—are also covert exclusivists. Radhakrishnan's pluralism is dependent upon the truthfulness of Advaita Hinduism while the Dalai Lama's pluralism is nothing other than a strict form of Tibetan Buddhist exclusivism.

In chap. 4 D'Costa outlines his alternative to pluralism—namely, Roman Catholic trinitarian theology. He begins by discussing the question of whether non-Christian religions, as such, should be viewed as *salvific* from the standpoint of Catholic orthodoxy. He argues that a proper reading of Vatican II and post-Conciliar documents leads to the conclusions that non-Christian religions, as such, *are not* vehicles of salvation. Next, he explores, from a trinitarian perspective, the significance of the Spirit's asserted universal presence within the cultures and religions of non-Christians. While he affirms that the Spirit's universal presence ensures the universal availability of salvation to adherents of non-Christian religions, his primary interest centers on the implications of the Spirit's presence in other religions for the Church. On one hand, he claims that we should be extremely reticent about "abstract talk of the 'presence of the Spirit' in other religions" (p. 128) and criticizes Catholic thinkers who sever "intrinsic links" between the persons of the Trinity, the Church, and the presence of God. On the other hand, he maintains that the Church must be attentive to the Spirit's presence in other religions. Through engagement with other religions the Church can experience God's presence, observe "Christ-like" behavior in the lives of non-Christians, and be challenged to change its practices. In the final section of chap. 4 D'Costa attempts to argue

that Roman Catholic trinitarianism provides a better basis for “tolerance” and “equality.” In chap. 5 D’Costa applies his doctrine of the universal presence of the Spirit to the thorny question of inter-religious prayer. He claims that because the Spirit inspires every “authentic prayer,” participation in inter-religious prayer may, in certain contexts, be appropriate, and that a refusal to consider God’s presence in other religions is tantamount to idolatry.

D’Costa’s trenchant critique of pluralism—which plays off an equivocation in the meaning of “exclusivism”—is brilliant in both substance and rhetoric. He rightly argues that pluralists are covert “exclusivists” and that the threefold taxonomy that frames this debate obscures the tradition-specific (read: exclusive) nature of all interpretations of religion. Because he engages five thinkers representing several different forms of pluralism (Western pluralism, Hindu pluralism and Buddhist pluralism), his case is far stronger than it would be if he merely engaged Hick. Furthermore, by connecting his critique to the issues of tolerance, openness, and equality, D’Costa effectively addresses the rhetorical component of this debate. There is much we can learn from D’Costa on this point. As evangelicals we often excel at addressing the “truth element” of the debate but frequently pay inadequate attention to the rhetorical issues associated with pluralism.

To understand his constructive argument, it is important to locate D’Costa vis-à-vis contemporary Catholic approaches to pluralism. While Vatican II clearly affirmed that non-Christian religions are (in some sense) to be viewed positively and that individuals who have never heard the gospel can experience salvation, these conciliar documents were silent regarding the means through which salvific grace is mediated. This silence has contributed to two conflicting positions, which might be outlined as follows: (P1) While salvation is available outside the Church, it is not mediated through non-Christian religions. (P2) Salvation is not only available outside the Church, but it is also mediated through non-Christian religions such that they are to be viewed as channels of salvation. D’Costa affirms P1. P2, the position D’Costa rejects, is exemplified by the Belgian Jesuit Jacques Dupuis in his book *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*. Both P1 and P2 can be broadly located under the “inclusivist” position (although one must bear in mind that D’Costa rejects this taxonomy). This demonstrates how far Catholic thought has moved from *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. While evangelicals debate the question of the salvation of *individuals* who do not express explicit faith in Christ, current Catholic debate surrounds the salvific role of non-Christian *religions*.

D’Costa is to be commended for attempting to think through the interface between Christianity and other religions from the standpoint of trinitarian theology. Even if one disagrees with a number of his conclusions—as I do—his discussion clearly demonstrates that what is currently at stake in emerging theologies of religion is not merely ecclesiology and soteriology, but *trinitarian theology*. His attempt to offer a trinitarian account of the universal presence of the Spirit is perhaps one of the most interesting elements of this book. In contrast to a number of Christian thinkers who make the Spirit a kind of free-floating agent who works apart from Christ and the Church, D’Costa rightly argues that intrinsic links exist between the persons of the Trinity, the Church, and the kingdom, and he defends this thesis through an extended exposition of John’s Gospel. He offers trenchant criticisms of Paul Knitter, Raimundo Pannikar, and Jacques Dupuis for driving a wedge between the Spirit and the second person of the Trinity and severing these links.

The primary weaknesses of this book surround D’Costa’s constructive proposal. He seems more effective at offering arguments *against* pluralists, who affirm the parity of all religions, and *against* Catholics, who claim that religions are vehicles of salvation, than he is in defending his positive claim that trinitarian theology provides a *better* basis for openness, tolerance, and equality. To start with, the way D’Costa has framed

the two sections of his book leaves an important question unanswered: Once it is recognized that Buddhists, Hindus, and Christians are all “exclusivists,” how may it be decided who is right? Then, from the standpoint of Christian faith and doctrine, it remains unclear how the “intrinsic links” between the second and third persons are to be maintained where Christ is not named as the incarnate Son and recognized as the Redeemer. More particularly, readers who do not share D’Costa’s Catholic theological assumptions will find many of his specific proposals regarding the presence of the Spirit in other religions problematic—especially his claims regarding the benefits of inter-religious prayer. In the end, an unresolved tension exists between D’Costa’s negative assertion that non-Christian religions do not mediate saving grace and his positive claims regarding the presence of the Holy Spirit in other religions. On one hand, he claims that religions do not mediate saving grace. On the other hand, he asserts that the Spirit “inchoately” forms children of God in these religions, inspires the prayers of adherents of non-Christian religions, and mediates the presence of God; indeed he goes so far as to say that “a refusal to even consider encountering the mystery of God within the other in shared prayer runs the risk of idolatry” (p. 144). While D’Costa avers these two themes do not contradict one another, one cannot blame the judicious reader for questioning this claim.

Religious pluralism will continue to challenge the church for many years to come. *The Meeting of Religions and the Trinity* should be read by anyone interested in wrestling with these issues.

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Kierkegaard, Language and the Reality of God. By Steven Shakespeare. *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001, x + 252 pp., \$69.95. *Divine Knowledge: A Kierkegaardian Perspective on Christian Education.* By David Willows. *Transcending Boundaries in Philosophy and Theology.* Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001, xii + 174 pp., \$69.95.

Of the many intellectual problems facing Christianity today, few are as urgent as the need to develop a theory of language and knowledge that can offer a coherent basis for Christian talk about God. The first two titles in Ashgate’s “Transcending Boundaries” series attempt to take up this formidable task, using the Danish philosopher-theologian, Søren Kierkegaard (1813–55), as a guide.

The central question of David Willows’s *Divine Knowledge* is “the extent to which the mind is actively involved” in the process of divine knowledge (p. 34). Willows seeks to demonstrate that a Kierkegaardian view of Christian faith “challenges reason’s ability to think its way into the realm of eternal truth” (p. 93). For Kierkegaard, divine knowledge is located purely “in the gift of grace,” so that truth comes not by the action of the human mind, but rather by “a radical interruption and transformation of the processes of human cognition” (p. 106). Thus divine knowledge is “entirely dependent upon the eternal Word that breaks in upon us from without” (p. 113).

In his first section, which constitutes almost half of the book, Willows offers a brief history of Christian epistemology. The aim of the whole section is to show that Christian epistemology has been consistently led astray by the influence of Socratic philosophy, according to which the human mind is able to ascend autonomously to the realm of truth. Willows argues that this view of the mind’s ascent to God prevailed overwhelmingly in patristic thought. Augustine, who features prominently in the study, is characterized as the quintessential representative of Socratic epistemology and is said

to be almost single-handedly responsible for setting Western theology “on a distinctly Socratic course” (pp. 32–33). Yet Augustine’s own understanding of knowledge, and the precise nature and extent of his reception of Platonism, are far more complex than Willows seems to appreciate. It is especially unfortunate that Willows does not interact with Augustine’s *De magistro*, in which the agent of all human knowledge is said to be Christ the Teacher.

Willows’s historical survey leaps from Augustine to Luther, and the Reformation is portrayed as a revolt against the Platonism that had descended from Augustine. Luther questioned “the prevailing confidence in a person’s ability to overcome his attraction to worldly things and rationally ascend towards the realm of Truth” (p. 28). But this reference to a “prevailing confidence” fails to take account of the complex and varied medieval views of sin, grace, faith, and reason. Willows’s description of the Reformation as “an attempt to rid Christian theology of [the Augustinian] philosophical inheritance” (p. 33) is also problematic, since, whatever else it may have been, the Reformation was certainly a revival of Augustinianism. The same unfortunate reduction of Western thought to Platonic-Augustinian influence appears in chapters 3 and 4, where the epistemologies of Descartes, Locke, and Kant are all characterized as “distinctly Socratic” (p. 36), and Lessing, Hegel, and Strauss are seen as developing the Socratic “myth of human ascent” (p. 66).

The second part of the study improves considerably as Willows turns to explore the critique of Socratic epistemology in Kierkegaard’s *Philosophical Fragments*. Willows highlights the epistemological coordinates presented in the *Fragments*: the noetic effects of sin, the moment of conversion, and the role of Christ the Teacher, who alone can “provide the learner with truth and the condition for understanding it” (p. 82).

Focusing on the Kierkegaardian leap of faith, Willows defends Kierkegaard against the charge of irrationality. For the unbeliever who lacks the necessary condition for understanding, faith can only appear irrational, and thus faith is absurd “only when viewed by someone on the outside, looking in” (p. 97). But once conversion has taken place and reason itself has been regenerated in the moment of revelation, the Christian regards the leap “as both internally consistent and logically coherent” (p. 98). As a witness to the coherence of Kierkegaard’s view of faith and reason, Willows compares the Kierkegaardian leap with Michael Polanyi’s thesis that all knowledge exists within a fiduciary framework.

In Part Three, Willows turns to education theory. Chapter 7 explores two education models: the “religious education” model, which is grounded in the Enlightenment-liberal confidence in the inherent goodness and subsequent progress of humanity, and the “Christian education” model, which is rooted in neo-orthodox theology. Willows’s critique of the former position is unfortunately blunted at times by his reliance on the concept of “the Socratic:” the basic flaw even of liberal theology is reduced to the influence of Platonism. Against this liberal education model, Willows defends a Christian education model that emphasizes the basic tenets of Kierkegaardian epistemology: the problem of the noetic effects of sin, the subsequent need for a radical epistemological disruption and reorientation through faith, the centrality of the Christ-event and of Christ himself as the epistemological Teacher, and the emphasis that the entire pedagogical process is “a transforming event” (p. 132).

In the final chapter, Willows employs this Christian education model to examine some of the concrete problems facing contemporary education theory. Especially prominent in this discussion is the apologetic question that the Kierkegaardian position raises: “Is faith so discontinuous with all other forms of knowing that it is impossible to defend within the public arena[?]” (p. 137). Willows concedes that there is no epistemological common ground between belief and unbelief. In a post-foundationalist environment, he argues, a responsible Christian position must involve the admission that the truth is “impervious to universal rational justification” (p. 142). It follows, then,

that to educate is “always to speak to the world from within the private walls of a particular fiduciary framework” (p. 145). According to Willows, this approach is the only proper basis on which the place of Christian theology in the secular academy can be defended. The future of theology in the academy rests on our ability to state unashamedly “that Christ is the only true foundation of . . . knowledge and learning,” without ever implying that the truth of Christ somehow “lies open to the universal grasp of human reason” (p. 154).

In spite of its shortcomings, *Divine Knowledge* offers a vision of a distinctively theological basis for Christian epistemology and pedagogy. But as an essentially theological account of knowledge, the book leaves untouched a number of important philosophical problems. Steven Shakespeare’s sophisticated philosophical study, *Kierkegaard, Language and the Reality of God*, on the other hand, engages deftly with some of the major problems of contemporary language theory and epistemology.

Shakespeare’s study is centrally concerned with the realism/anti-realism debate among theorists of religious knowledge and language. In this context, realism involves the belief that God has an objective existence independent of human thought and language, and that language about God is not finally reducible to non-religious language. According to anti-realism, in contrast, God is a subjective construct of human thought and language, and language about God is ultimately reducible to subjective, non-religious language.

An important question in Kierkegaard scholarship corresponds to this debate between realists and anti-realists: Is Kierkegaard a non-rational subjectivist about God, or does he affirm the objectivity and transcendence of God and of divine revelation? Shakespeare’s thesis is that Kierkegaard does not fit neatly into either the realist or the anti-realist camp; instead, he occupies “a third position, somewhere between the two” (p. 22). Shakespeare describes this third position as “ethical realism.” While Kierkegaard’s ethical realism draws on elements of both anti-realism (namely, faith is a subjective passion rather than a matter of objective cognition) and realism (namely, faith puts us in contact with an objective otherness), Shakespeare insists that it is not therefore “merely a neutral middle point” (p. 24). Rather, ethical realism critiques all totalizing views of knowledge and thus “disturbs the whole basis upon which realist and anti-realist conclusions are drawn” (p. 24). Anti-realism is rejected because, for all its apparent agnosticism and epistemological modesty, it necessarily “holds to a totalizing philosophical standpoint” (p. 141); and any metaphysical realism that makes God “a knowable object” and thereby “reduce[s] his otherness” is likewise rejected (p. 158).

In Chapter 6, Shakespeare enters the debate over the nature of Kierkegaardian subjectivity. For Kierkegaard, there can be no objective, empirical verification of the truth of Christianity; truth can only be subjective, since there is “simply no standpoint from which an absolute truth could be proclaimed, and no language in which it could self-evidently be communicated” (p. 163). Nevertheless, the fact that the transcendent God can only be apprehended subjectively, through passionate faith, does not undermine the objectivity of God. According to Shakespeare, Kierkegaard’s concern is with the *mode* in which God is encountered, and that mode is “ethical, passionate, interested” (p. 168). In this respect, Kierkegaard’s ethical realism avoids the pitfalls of both anti-realism and extreme realism: “Ethical realism refuses to reduce the reality of God to that of a brute object among other objects in the universe, but it also refuses to reduce God to the status of a subjective fiction” (p. 168).

In Chapter 7, “The Analogy of Communication,” Shakespeare explores Kierkegaard’s view of analogy against the backdrop of classical Thomism. Like Aquinas, Kierkegaard chooses analogy as a middle way between univocity (which betrays God’s transcendence) and equivocation (which makes God unknowable). For Kierkegaard, however, it is not so much propositions that have an analogical function in the knowl-

edge of God, but the concrete act of human communication itself is analogous to divine communication, and the former is possible only because of the prior reality of the latter. The "how" of religious communication, like the "how" of faith, is of decisive importance. The role of analogy, then, is not to provide conceptual knowledge about God but rather to point to a particular mode of relational communication. Thus narrative and acts of communication take primacy over propositional content; truth is "not an intellectual content or essence, but a way to be followed, a life to be imitated" (p. 218). God's gracious communication to us "demands an existential response of imitation" (p. 220), and apart from this ethical response, this passionate faith, divine communication can never be understood.

From all this it is clear that Kierkegaard does not espouse a straightforward metaphysical realism but rather an ethical, existential, relational realism that seeks to hold in tension the objective and subjective poles of religious knowledge. It is unfortunate that Shakespeare himself seems less disposed to allow both poles to remain in tension when, at the end of the book, he uses the subjective aspect of ethical realism to "deconstruct" Kierkegaard's religious exclusivism. In Shakespeare's view, "one does not need to name the name of Jesus . . . in order to reduplicate in life the pattern of embodied love which Christ represents and solicits" (p. 238). But this invitation to a more inclusive understanding of religious knowledge seems to involve exalting the subjective pole of faith at the expense of the objectivity of God. For Kierkegaard, in contrast, the subjectivity of faith is grounded ultimately on the objectivity of the Christian God, so that religious knowledge is not a matter merely of *ethics* but of ethical *realism*.

With these two titles, Ashgate's "Transcending Boundaries" series has begun to make a notable contribution to the contemporary discussion of religious language and knowledge. While the merit and significance of David Willows's study are admittedly modest, it is commendable for outlining a theological epistemology that refuses to allow Christian knowledge to be reduced to a mere species of secular knowledge. Steven Shakespeare, as both a first-rate interpreter of Kierkegaard and a capable and creative philosophical thinker in his own right, offers a sophisticated account of divine knowledge, providing valuable correctives to those of us on all sides of the realist/anti-realist debate. Those with special interests in hermeneutic theory and epistemology will profit from engaging with these studies, and with the thought of Søren Kierkegaard.

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