

BOOK REVIEWS

Editor's Note: The following is a companion review to *The IVP Women's Bible Commentary*, reviewed by Michelle Lee and Joanne Jung, published in JETS 47/1 (March 2004): 161-64.

The IVP Women's Bible Commentary: An indispensable resource for all who want to view Scripture through different eyes. Edited by Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2002, xxvii + 874 pp., \$30.00.

At first blush, the title inspires caution. For some people, a Bible commentary specifically designed for women may evoke intimations of powder-puff scholarship or hints of devotional fluff. However, considered from within the current evangelical subcultural context, the production of such a commentary warrants legitimacy.

This quest for the personal relevance of Scripture has prompted the appearance of a plethora of new Bibles and commentaries. In this effervescent publishing climate, it was inevitable that a commentary targeted for women would appear. If nothing else, the consideration that women constitute the majority of church constituencies would have provided the incentive to serve their distinctive needs. Fortunately the initiative for producing the present work was assumed by a reputable publishing house, and the editorial responsibility was entrusted to two competent and responsible scholars. Committed to less experienced hands, the project could have had considerably less positive results. As it is, the commentary stands as a valuable and informative reference work, well suited to serve a large readership and, in particular, the one it was primarily designed to reach.

In terms of appearance, this work is comparable in size to other one-volume Bible commentaries, exceeding 900 pages with the prefatory materials. The actual text of the commentary is divided in two vertical columns per page. For each book of the OT and the NT, there is an introduction that covers matters of historical context, date, occasion and purpose, an outline of the contents of the biblical document, the text of the commentary proper, and a bibliography that lists at least half a dozen publications, most of them contemporary.

The authors of the commentaries were obviously given some latitude for the organization of their contributions, since the format of the explanatory sections is not uniform. Most of them chose to follow the order available in the biblical text by providing comments sequentially. Thus, the book of Psalms receives complete coverage with an explanation for each of its 150 units. For some books, the commentary is limited to selected passages. For instance, the author who covered Numbers isolated eight sections of the book that pertain to women's concerns and limited her comments mostly to those passages. Occasionally, a book is treated thematically. Thus, the commentary on the Gospel of John is organized according to the motif of Jesus' conversations with individuals. The benefits of initiative and diversity may have been intended to compensate for the loss of methodological consistency.

A significant feature of this volume is the inclusion in the text of 77 supplementary articles on a variety of topics ranging from the theological (such as inspiration, the Trinity, atonement, covenant, and sin) to ethical and social concerns (like polygamy, violence, and homosexuality), all the way to very down-to-earth matters (such as sibling

rivalry, clothing, and menopause). All those articles could be gathered together in a separate book that would make for fascinating reading. They are actually interspersed through the commentary according to topical relevance, such as the article entitled "God's Call to Social Justice" that appears in the middle of the commentary on Amos.

Among those articles, two stand out by reason of their relative length. The first, on "The Inspiration and the Interpretation of Scripture," appropriately appears at the beginning of the book and constitutes one of its most doctrinally provocative parts. The other, entitled "Intertestamental History and Literature," is predictably located between the OT and NT sections of the commentary. They are both substantial and informative statements that could be profitably referenced in connection with any Bible introduction work.

Some 90 authors, most of them women, are listed as contributors to the project of either articles or commentaries. They are described in the preface as "women of faith who believe that all Scripture is inspired by God" (p. xiv). The credits indicate they represent a vast array of ethnic backgrounds and denominational affiliations. Many of them are graduates of or educators in prestigious institutions of higher learning scattered around the globe. The editors explain that the cultural and confessional diversity thus reflected in the commentary was a preconsidered goal: "The chosen perspective is that of women, but the work of scholars from all around the world and from different denominational backgrounds have [*sic*] been included in recognition that we need to hear from those of different cultures and different backgrounds" (p. xiv).

Obviously, the most remarkable feature of this publication pertains to the purpose that was assigned for its production. The editors make it emphatically clear that their work was not intended to supplant the contribution that has already been made by existing commentaries since most of them reflect "integrity, insight and good scholarship" (p. xiii). But they also observe that many of them were written by men, from the perspective of men. The women's commentary was therefore designed to redress the imbalance with a work intended to supplement the contribution made by existing commentaries with the distinctive perspective of women on the Scripture. This seems to have meant at least three things for the editors.

First, the commentary would offer women "the opportunity to have the Scripture explained to them in ways that are relevant to their lives" (p. xiv). This explanation would not necessarily focus on specific passages about women. Rather, all the Scripture would be viewed from a woman's perspective.

Second, the authors of the commentary would identify issues within Scripture that relate more particularly to women and to their concerns. This means the contributors would approach the Scripture with questions that are asked by women.

Finally, the "hard texts" that seem to discriminate against women by consigning them to positions of subordination would be examined from "new, faith-filled directions" (p. xiv). In this regard, the editors clearly demark themselves from the feminist agenda that approaches Scripture with a "hermeneutic of suspicion." They affirm the "full inspiration of the Bible and the full equality of women" (p. xiv). However, because God's word comes to humans through both divine and human authorship, "believers may appropriately ask some very hard questions about text and context, original intention and enduring significance" (p. xiv). While the contributions generally reflect a conservative evangelical approach to biblical scholarship, the disclaimer is advisedly made in the preface that there is among them "a considerable variety of points of view" and that, as a result, "not all reflect the views of the editors or the publisher" (p. xiii).

The authority of the Bible as God's word is assumed and affirmed throughout the commentary by writers who obviously adhere to some formulation of biblical inerrancy, while others use the tools of higher critical research to determine matters of authorship, dating, and composition. Such differences in underlying presuppositions may dis-

turb those readers who will sift through the text to find confirmations for their favorite shibboleths but, on the whole, they affect neither the quality nor the value of the commentary. Most of it consists of dynamic and vigorous discourse, exploding with fresh vitality. It produces a collective voice that resonates with prophetic passion and an obvious desire to share with the church understandings of the Bible and brilliant insights that could have been perceived only by women. Delightful surprises reward the attentive reader such as a personal reference, of all places, in the bibliography for Numbers. The evocative notation states that the information provided in the commentary on nomadic life derives from twenty-five years of personal interaction with half a dozen desert tribes whom to visit is "to enter a little-known corner of today's world, as well as the world of the Bible. To receive their hospitality is a great blessing" (p. 87).

A work of this nature could easily have been overwhelmed by a desire to vindicate female roles, as an apologetic for equality and against oppression, as a militant expression of boudoir hysterics. But the tone is irenic and the deportment dignified. Although controversy is not shunned, the Bible is serenely presented as a woman-friendly book and God's purpose for the making of Christian community is described as the intentional creation of networks of non-hierarchical relations of complementarity within family and church.

At times—too serenely, perhaps!—discussions of the so-called "anti-women Bible clobber texts" are often based on older arguments that made their point successfully three decades ago or more. While they may remain valid, those lines of argumentation have been refined and expanded in recent scholarship to the extent that the non-hierarchical complementarian case could have been presented more forcefully in the commentary.

For instance, while the divine nobility of the "helper" designation for the woman is recognized (Gen 2:18), its value as "rescuer" is not acknowledged. We are told that, in the garden, Adam needed "a friend," when actually, the immediate biblical context indicates he desperately needed a counterpart for both of them to become together the community of oneness God had intended to create (v. 24). Likewise, the word "head" is appropriately placed in its NT context of mutual submission that justifies its meaning as "source of life," thus excluding hierarchical connotations. However, no mention is made of the fact that every NT reference to the headship of Christ for the church describes this function of "head" as "servant provider" rather than "source," which represents only one aspect of this servant ministry.

More importantly, the limitations placed on female ministries in the Pastoral Epistles are discussed without reference to the similarly restrictive prohibitions placed on male ministries in the same epistles. The commentary should have noted that the same passage that forbids women to teach and to have authority over men also *requires* that men who want to lead, teach or manage the affairs of the church *must* be married (husbands of one wife) and have children who are believers, obedient, and show proper respect (Titus 1:6). The commentary could have observed that such rigorous provisions exclude from church leadership ministries not only women but also single men, childless married men, married men with only one child, married men with children too small or too obstinate to profess faith, married men with disobedient believing children, and married men with obedient believing children who are not respectful in all things. However, the commentary does rightly point out that the radical limitations imposed on ministry according to 1 Timothy reflected unique historical circumstances that necessitated exceptionally restrictive measures not mandated in the rest of the NT.

Because of its uniqueness and because of the distinctive contributions it can make to believers in all walks of life, this commentary deserves to find its way into every Christian household. It should become indispensable especially to students of the Bible

desirous to look at all sides of some of the most hotly debated issues in the contemporary church. Even pastors, leaders, and scholars who oppose women's leadership in church and family find in this commentary easy access to the egalitarian hermeneutic that has earned its rightful place in the theological forum of the evangelical community pointedly because of the strength and clarity exhibited in publications such as this book.

Gilbert Bilezikian
Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL

The Gospel of John: A Commentary. 2 vols. By Craig S. Keener. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003. xlviii + 1636 pp., \$79.95.

The publication of a major new commentary on John's Gospel is always a significant event in NT studies. While somewhat different in orientation, the scope of Keener's two-volume work puts him in the league of the likes of Raymond Brown and Rudolf Schnackenburg, each of whom produced multi-volume commentaries on this Gospel. As the accolades on the dust jacket from a "Who's Who" of Johannine scholars attest, Keener's commentary is set to make a major contribution to the field for years to come. The following review will seek to provide a representative (though obviously not exhaustive) assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of this monumental achievement. Beyond this I will interact with Keener's specific interpretive positions in my forthcoming BECNT commentary on the Gospel of John.

The present work begins with 330 pages of introduction and concludes with 400 pages of bibliography and indexes (the scope of both of which is astounding, especially considering the small font size used for the entire volume). Between these lengthy sections are 900 pages of closely argued commentary, an estimated third of which is footnotes, which leaves about 600 pages of commentary text. Perhaps if the reader realizes that out of 1600 pages only about 600 pages are actual commentary, this will make the task of working through Keener's tome seem a bit less daunting. Even so, in my judgment this commentary is not for the general reader, but for the Johannine specialist, who will find in the pages of Keener's work a wealth of ancient references to consult and explore.

The primary contribution to Johannine studies envisioned by Keener himself is that of examining the Gospel in light of its social-historical context. While Keener's commentary was published at the end of 2003, the bulk of the commentary was completed in 1997, which, in light of the furious pace of Johannine scholarship, does date his work to a certain extent. In some cases, the material may be even more dated, as in the case of Morris's commentary, where Keener refers to the original 1971 edition rather than the 1995 revised edition. At the same time, however, it must be said that Keener's bibliographic control is on the whole magisterial (though hardly anyone can claim to be fully abreast of all of Johannine scholarship in this day and age any more).

With regard to introductory matters, Keener suggests that John falls into the general genre category of biography, though he believes that John has taken "more sermonic liberties" (p. 51). According to Keener, John is both historian and theologian, presupposing a Jewish salvation-historical perspective in which God reveals his character by his acts in history (p. 46). Keener provides extensive discussions on genre-related matters, such as the nature of the Johannine discourses, with sections on oral cultures; note-taking; disciples, learning, and memorization; and John's discourses in relation to ancient speech-writing. The historical reliability of John's Gospel is not

viewed as a foregone conclusion, but Keener is open to establish it upon close investigation (pp. 79–80).

The almost sixty-page long section on authorship came as a pleasant surprise to me as one who affirms the Gospel's apostolic authorship. Keener states at the outset that the apostolic authorship of John's Gospel has often been opposed out of dogmatism and contends that "traditional conservative scholars have made a better case for Johannine authorship of the Gospel . . . than other scholars have made against it." Keener (who did not affirm Matthean authorship in his recent Matthew commentary) contends that the case for Johannine authorship is stronger than that for Matthean, Markan, and Lukan (!) authorship (p. 83) and that he leans toward the view that "John [the apostle] is the author of the Gospel as we have it" (p. 83). In the following pages Keener provides a strong critique and refutation of the view (held, among others, by Martin Hengel) that Papias distinguished between the apostle John and a "John the elder." Keener contends that Eusebius (our source for Papias's writings) had an agenda (namely, that of driving a wedge between the apostle John as author of the Gospel and John the elder as author of the Apocalypse) that rendered him anything but unbiased and skewed his interpretation of Papias.

The thesis that the apostle John was the source of a tradition later reworked by others, likewise, according to Keener, is "a workable compromise solution" that "is tenable but probably not necessary" (p. 100). After an insightful discussion of the plausibility of postulating apostolic authorship in the face of John's advanced age at the time of writing (John was at least eighty years old), Keener assesses Brown's theory of the Johannine community's development and concludes that this theory is "at most *possible*" (p. 110, italics his). He also states that Culpepper's argument in his seminal 1983 monograph *The Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel* is "brilliant" but one with which he disagrees (p. 112). Sections on the relationships between John's Gospel and the epistles and Revelation respectively (pp. 123–39) are well worth reading as well.

The following unit on "Social Contexts" deals with the date (mid-AD 90s), the provenance and location of John's audience (Roman Asia, most likely Ephesus or Smyrna), the question of whether or not John's community was a sect (not in a narrow sense, though the answer to this question depends largely on what one means by "sect"), Eastern Mediterranean backgrounds, and John's Gospel and gnosticism. A separate section is devoted to the Jewish context, particularly the diaspora Jewish background. Regarding the "Johannine community's" alleged conflict with the synagogue at the time of writing, Keener judges that the conflict dialogues in John's Gospel seem to reflect Johannine polemic against the synagogue leadership. He thinks that the *birkat-ha-minim* probably antedate the Gospel but deems it improbable that this was the main catalyst for the synagogue expulsion experienced by the "Johannine community."

As to purpose, Keener thinks an evangelistic purpose is unlikely and strongly argues for an edifying purpose instead (citing 8:31–32). Regarding John's use of the set phrase "the Jews," Keener makes the intriguing suggestion that the expression is ironic (in that John grants the authorities the title they covet while in fact undermining their claim, citing Rev. 2:9; 3:9) and ought to be placed in quotation marks in translation to preserve the irony. The final two sections of the introduction are devoted to the revelatory motifs of knowledge, vision, and signs (whereby Keener affirms the essentially positive function of signs in John's Gospel) as well as to Christology and other theology (including discussions of messianic expectations in Judaism and uses of the title "Son of God" in ancient Judaism).

With regard to the actual commentary, Keener affirms that both the prologue and the epilogue were written by the author (i.e. the apostle John). According to Keener, the prologue was probably added by the author after completing a first draft of the Gospel

(pp. 333–34). Concerning the epilogue, Keener makes a strong case for the literary unity of John 21 as a chapter and as an integral part of the entire Gospel (pp. 1219–22). Keener's discussion of 21:24–25 (pp. 1240–42), too, seems to be open (if not favorable) toward the possibility that the author of the entire Gospel wrote the Gospel's final two verses (though he maintains that at least the plural in 21:24 would seem to represent others, apparently discarding the possibility of an "authorial we"). Keener does not comment on the implications of the first person singular "I suppose" in 21:25.

At places where others may see symbolic overtones, Keener repeatedly (and to my mind, refreshingly) opts for more straightforward literal readings, such as the reference to Jesus seeing Nathanael under a fig tree (according to Keener, probably mentioned simply because a specific landmark was necessary for some reason, p. 486) or the miraculous catch of fish (where he says the number 153 "could simply stem from an accurate memory of a careful count on the occasion, because fish had to be counted to be divided among fishermen," p. 1233). Regarding the latter issue, he maintains that the number 153 may be no more symbolic than the reference to Peter swimming about 100 yards in the immediate context (21:8).

One place where Keener may not have spoken the last word are his attempted resolutions of the familiar quandaries of the Johannine temple cleansing and of the Johannine Passover chronology as it relates to the date and time of Jesus' crucifixion. With regard to the former issue, Keener states that two temple cleansings are unlikely and that a harmonization of John's chronology with that of the Synoptics is impossible. His (not uncommon) solution is that John here adapts Synoptic tradition to make an important theological point. According to Keener, it is historically implausible that Jesus would challenge the temple system early on and yet continue in public ministry for another two or three years, sometimes even visiting Jerusalem (though he does note that Jesus faces considerable hostility there when he does, pp. 518–19). To the contrary, I would maintain that an early temple cleansing accounts well for Jewish hostility toward Jesus almost from the beginning (see esp. 5:18) and that Jesus' continuing in ministry for two or three more years is eminently plausible historically in light of Jesus' pattern of withdrawal (3:22; 6:15; 7:9–10; 8:59; 10:40) and his caution from the very inception of his ministry in light of the fact that his "time" has not yet come (2:4; 7:6).

Keener's opening affirmation of apostolic authorship is not always carried through in the actual commentary proper. Since Keener believes in apostolic authorship, why speak of "John's tradition" in, for example, accounts of the miraculous feeding and of Jesus' walking on the water in chapter 6 as "independent" (pp. 671–72) rather than mentioning the possibility of eyewitness recollection? In another example, Keener comments at 7:1 that "John may scatter the material simply because he has independent tradition of earlier visits to Jerusalem" (p. 703), again without making any mention of the possibility of eyewitness testimony on John's part. Keener's language here is one of Robinson's "new look" that deals in traditions but has largely jettisoned the possibility of apostolic authorship. If Keener actually holds to the latter, why not make this a more consistent part of the detailed exegesis in his commentary?

On a different note, I was surprised to find that someone as keenly interested in background as Keener makes no effort to fit the events narrated in John's Gospel into an overall chronological framework. Clearly, there are difficulties that must be navigated in doing so, and certainty is hard to come by, but at least in principle, it seems that this would be a worthwhile endeavor for someone affirming the historical reliability of the Johannine narrative. Also, Keener has the occasional tendency to read historical background into the text. A case in point is his contention that Gentile slaves entered into a Jewish slave holder's service by performing an act of menial service and his proposal on that basis that "perhaps Jesus demonstrates his servitude in such a manner here" (i.e. at 13:1–17; p. 907).

At other times Keener floats a (rather implausible) background proposal only to reject it, such as adducing the Roman custom “in which the nearest kin would receive in the mouth the dying person’s final breath to ensure the survival of that person’s spirit” as a possible background for Jesus’ giving up his spirit in 19:30b while subsequently informing the reader that this custom seems to have been a local Italian one largely removed from John’s eastern Mediterranean audience (p. 1149). One may legitimately wonder what, in those instances, is the utility for the reader, and for interpreting the Johannine text, of including these types of suggestions if even the author thinks them to be of improbable relevance. In my opinion, including this material unnecessarily clutters the presentation and makes it more difficult for the reader to screen out the information that is genuinely helpful for interpreting a given passage in John’s Gospel. The same can be said for the oversupply of background information provided by Keener at many points of his commentary, sometimes clearly irrelevant to the exegesis of John’s Gospel, such as his reference at 10:1 to the large number of thieves in Egyptian villages requiring the setting up of volunteers to guard their threshing floors at night (p. 803).

Owing to this characteristic failure on Keener’s part to screen out irrelevant background data and his practice of providing a large data base of potentially apropos information for interpretation, the task of sifting through the material and determining its relevance or lack thereof falls on the reader. This is why the more likely primary audience is not regular Bible students but Johannine specialists, because only the latter will know how to benefit from a work that is perhaps more accurately characterized as an extensive background reference resource on John’s Gospel than as a commentary proper (another recent example of this kind of genre that comes to mind is Quinn and Wacker’s encyclopedic ECC commentary on Paul’s letters to Timothy).

To conclude, Keener’s commentary clearly is a masterpiece of amazing erudition, amassing a wealth of potentially relevant background information that will be of invaluable benefit to the discerning reader. Using this reference tool requires considerable exegetical skill and powers of judgment, which is why Keener’s commentary is no replacement for more accessible commentaries on John’s Gospel such as those by Carson, Ridderbos, or Morris. To illustrate the envisioned usefulness of Keener’s work, in my Greek exegesis class on John’s Gospel this coming summer, I plan to use one or several of the just mentioned commentaries as course texts. Keener’s volume will be put on reserve in the library, and students will be encouraged to peruse his commentary according to their ability and research interest.

Andreas J. Köstenberger
Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC

A Royal Priesthood? The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically: A Dialogue with Oliver O’Donovan. Edited by Craig Bartholomew, Jonathan Chaplin, Robert Song, and Al Wolters. Scripture and Hermeneutics series. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002, xxiv + 446 pp., \$34.99.

This work grew out of papers presented at the Scripture and Hermeneutics Seminar at Cheltenham, England in June of 2001. This seminar gathered scholars of various disciplines to discuss the theologically based political philosophy of Oliver O’Donovan, Regius Professor of Moral and Pastoral Theology at Oxford University, especially as expressed through his work *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the Roots of Political Theology* (Cambridge University Press, 1996; hereafter *DN*), a work Colin Greene in his

essay calls "one of the most original, comprehensive and thoroughly biblically grounded works of political theology to appear in recent years," and to a lesser degree his work *Resurrection and Moral Order* (Eerdmans, 1994). Most of the contributors express appreciation for O'Donovan's works, even if they express reservations.

Craig G. Bartholomew begins by outlining O'Donovan's system. The unifying biblical theme around which O'Donovan builds his political theology in *DN* is the kingdom of God, first embodied in historical Israel and then fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Associated with the divine rule in the OT are the concepts of salvation, judgment, and possession that provide for O'Donovan a framework for exploring the major questions of authority in Western tradition. In his view, before Christ one might speak of two kingdoms (Babylon and Israel) under two rules (Babylon and Yahweh), but Christ unsettles the two-kingdom concept by bringing in God's kingdom, disarming principalities and powers, and sweeping away existing orders of government. Authorities are then reduced to the role once held by Israel's judges. Secular governments are not agents of Christ, but are Christ's conquered enemies. And yet they bear indirect testimony to his sovereignty and his dawning glory, just as the moon's face bears witness to the bombardment of meteors. O'Donovan goes on to defend the idea of Christendom as an expression of Christian mission and claims the affirmations of early modern political liberalism (freedom, mercy in judgment, tempered justice, openness to speech) are the positive legacy of Christendom in this post-Christendom age.

Various questions are raised concerning O'Donovan's use of the OT. O'Donovan seems to be a theological moderate in the tradition of Barth who holds, for example, to the 7th-century BC dating for Deuteronomy. R. W. L. Moberly warns O'Donovan that his acceptance of mainstream biblical criticism undermines his arguments from the history of the kingdom of God in Israel since the history of Israel reconstructed by critical scholarship deviates considerably from the story of Israel presented by the Bible. Moreover, Moberly finds O'Donovan's dependence on the Psalms for his OT theology of the kingdom of God to be out of balance, suggesting O'Donovan should have given greater weight to the Mosaic Torah, which is more clearly foundational to OT religion.

J. Gordon McConville, like Moberly, finds fault with O'Donovan for not utilizing to a greater degree the Torah and its associated concept of covenant. Specifically, O'Donovan gives insufficient attention to elements of political theory in Deuteronomy that allow a king contingent upon the king's being subject to the Torah and limiting his privileges (Deut 17:14–20). This shows (contra O'Donovan) that the OT limits absolutism, and it provides "no single or final ideal political structure," but permits a considerable degree of innovation. In fact, says McConville, when Deuteronomy provides for judges, priests, courts, and other officials of state, it provides a form of "separation of powers" under the "constitution" of the covenant. O'Donovan dismisses much of McConville's analysis as a seventeenth-century "Whig reading" of the text.

Craig G. Bartholomew's second essay tries to show how the wisdom literature could fit into O'Donovan's system. Wisdom is not unrelated to politics since, "By [wisdom] kings reign and rulers decree what is just" (Prov 8:15). But wisdom in Proverbs is tied to the theology of creation rather than the theology of the kingdom, which may require some adjustment of O'Donovan's theology of history.

M. Daniel Carroll R. concentrates on how the victory of Christ over all principalities plays a central role in O'Donovan, allowing him to present a (partially) realized eschatology that understands the kingdom of God to have come with the resurrection and exaltation of Christ, providing a vantage point for a fresh understanding of the nature and role of secular authorities. The complaint, however, is that there is little tangibility to the "not yet" aspect of eschatology in O'Donovan. With liberation theology, this author argues that future hope should motivate Christians to transform the existing

conditions into the direction of the eschaton, justifying this approach by reference to the role of hope in Isaiah and Amos.

Andrew Lincoln tries to show how the book of John could be analyzed through the categories of O'Donovan's system in *DN*. N. T. Wright supplements O'Donovan's theme of how the coming of God's kingdom in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ sweeps away existing orders of government that are of this passing age. To Wright, the Pauline teaching "Jesus is Lord" was necessarily and intentionally subversive of Rome's insistence on the divine lordship of Caesar. Thus, even though the kingdom of God is not of this world, and is not instituted by worldly force (cf. Romans 13), the preaching of the gospel is, nonetheless, an example of "the confrontation of the gospel and the powers of the world."

Bernd Wannewetsch seeks the politico-ecclesial implications of Romans 12. Gerrit de Kruijf wonders whether O'Donovan's christological, salvation-historical triumph over angelic authorities reading of Romans 13 reads too much into the text. Christopher Rowland examines how *DN* uses the Apocalypse through a preterist-idealist analysis with which he agrees. However, Rowland would like to see a more politically committed, imaginative approach to using the Apocalypse upon liberationist lines. Gilbert Meilaender examines how O'Donovan tries to bridge the gulf between ethics and exegesis.

Jonathan Chapman takes O'Donovan to task for using "Christian [Political] Liberalism" as the fruit of the interaction of Christianity with European culture without identifying any leading representatives of this approach, and indeed excluding from it John Locke, whom American Christians might list as a proponent. He questions whether O'Donovan is right to point to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits Congress from making a law to establish or hinder religion, as marking the symbolic end of Christendom. O'Donovan holds that with the passage of the First Amendment, the state was "freed from all responsibility to recognize God's self-disclosure in history." Chapman also questions O'Donovan's "dispensationalist political eschatology" that sharply distinguishes between the role of the kingdom of God and of secular government before Christ and after Christ. Chapman instead prefers the approach of Calvinism and Thomism that views government as part of the created order and sees more continuity between the testaments than does O'Donovan.

Colin Greene questions *DN*'s defense of the concept of "Christendom." Greene argues that the concept of Christendom is theologically flawed and that in practice, whether in the East or the West, whether through Lutheran "two kingdom" theology or Calvinist visions of mediated theocracy, it has inevitably degenerated into "insidious forms of coercion and compulsion which eroded the cogency of the Christian gospel." Peter Schott, a liberation theologian, in probably the most negative essay in the collection, prefers the "Southern" (liberationist) approach that relates the poor and authority together (the poor themselves being a source of authority) to O'Donovan's "Northern" political theology that concentrates on authority alone. Joan O'Donovan—Oliver's wife and a historian of political theology in her own right, who along with her husband published an anthology of writings on political theology, *From Irenaeus to Grotius* (Eerdmans, 1999)—discusses the concepts of nation-state that exist, and proposes a Christian concept of a nation as a "concrete rendering over time of legal justice."

Finally, James W. Skillen, president of the Center for Public Justice, a Washington, DC-based advocacy group, questions O'Donovan's view that the state can only be considered "an enemy of Christ, able to show the signs of Christ's kingship only by the marks of its defeat." Rather, the victory of Christ over the state can redeem the state so it can become an agent of Christ. Skillen, unlike O'Donovan, sees no contradiction between the command for individual Christians to love their enemies and take no personal vengeance, and the state's duty to mete out retribution to evildoers. Skillen fears

O'Donovan's theological-political ethic will "further encourage some Christian ethicists to disconnect Church and state to such a degree that no basis will be left for a Christian understanding of the state."

This book is evidence that O'Donovan's works are making an impact in Christian thinking about political theology and ethics. The present work provides a valuable critique and deserves a place on the shelves of libraries that have already purchased O'Donovan's *Desire of the Nations*.

Joe M. Sprinkle

Crossroads College, Rochester, MN

The Doctrine of God. A Theology of Lordship. By John M. Frame. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002, xxii + 864 pp., \$39.99.

Fifteen years have passed since the first installment of John Frame's projected four-volume "Theology of Lordship" series. Entitled *The Doctrine of the Knowledge of God*, the inaugural volume set forth a biblical account of covenantal epistemology in light of divine lordship. We now have the long-awaited second volume, *The Doctrine of God*. Volumes on ethics (*The Doctrine of the Christian Life*) and Scripture (*The Doctrine of the Word of God*) are expected to follow in (relatively) short order.

The central motif of this work is that Yahweh is the covenant Lord. Because Frame's goal is to produce a biblical exposition of the doctrine of God in terms of covenant lordship, he maintains a methodological commitment to *sola scriptura* throughout the work. (Roughly five thousand Scripture citations demonstrate the seriousness of Frame's intent.)

In Part 1, Frame proposes three "Lordship attributes": control, authority, and presence. These are central to the content and structure of Frame's work. God's *control* of nature and history is efficacious and universal, while his *authority* is absolute and universal. His supreme control and authoritative evaluation operate not only from above, but also from within and to us through his covenantal *presence*, to bless and/or to curse. Crucial to Frame's theology and pedagogy is that these triadic distinctions of the Lordship attributes are perspectively related and mutually interpreting, such that one cannot be understood apart from the others. This means that a theological encyclopedia holds little interest for Frame, whose order of presentation is primarily determined by pedagogical concerns.

In Part 2 Frame shows that unbiblical theologies invariably distort both God's transcendence (control-authority) and immanence (presence), simultaneously exhibiting rationalist and irrationalist tendencies. Examples of this are seen when critics suppose that genuine human freedom-responsibility and the existence of evil are incompatible with the Lordship attributes as traditionally understood. Frame tackles these classical problems, arguing for a compatibilistic concept of freedom and setting forth the biblical portrait of how the existence of evil relates to God's control, authority, and presence.

Part 3 expounds a philosophy of Lordship, averring that there is a distinctively biblical ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Only Christian ethics does justice to the normative, situational, and existential perspectives. Only Christian epistemology can account for both genuine knowledge and proper humility. And only Christian metaphysics properly understands the Creator-creature distinction. This philosophical prolegomenon sets the stage for the remaining three major sections that unpack God's revelation of himself.

Part 4 places the acts of the Lord under the rubric of his *control*, examining God's miracles, providence, creation, and decrees. Part 5 deals with the biblical descriptions of God from the perspective of his *authority*, expounding the divine names, images, and attributes. The latter are classified according to another triadic categorization: goodness, knowledge, and power. Part 6, lastly, deals with the triunity of God as an aspect of divine *presence*, offering a glimpse into God's inner life and the life that believers share with him.

The book ends with nine appendices: an extensive list of triads that may reflect or illumine the Trinity in some way, two responses to the embarrassingly incompetent critiques of Frame by Mark Karlberg, and seven previously published book reviews by Frame that relate to the doctrine of God.

Before moving to analysis and the place of Frame's work in comparison with other recent attempts, it may be helpful to examine how Frame approaches some of the divine attributes as traditionally understood. The last several years have witnessed an increased challenge by evangelical philosophers and theologians to jettison or at least redefine attributes such as eternity, immutability, impassability, simplicity, omnipotence, and omniscience.

Eternality. After surveying the major options, Frame suggests that it may be impossible for us to derive an explicit answer from Scripture on these questions since the biblical authors did not have our modern, scientific concepts in mind. With regard to his temporal transcendence, God is not bound by the human limitations of beginning and end, change, ignorance, and temporal frustration. The scriptural presentation of God's relationship to time is most like the atemporalist account, though Frame admits he cannot present a watertight argument in its favor. He does argue, however, that once libertarian freedom is denied, all relevant factors favor atemporality and none favor temporality. On the other hand, from the aspect of temporal immanence, God is able to know temporally indexed expressions, feel with human beings the flow of time from one moment to the next, react to events, mourn, rejoice, hear, respond, etc. Therefore, God is temporal, but not merely temporal. He exists in time, but transcends time. He is both within and outside of the temporal box. He is both the Lord of time and the Lord in time.

Immutability. Frame understands God to be unchanging in his atemporal or supratemporal existence. His essential attributes, decretive will, covenant faithfulness, and the truth of his revelation are unchanging. God is not unchanging, however, in all respects. He is not only the author of time, but he is an actor within time. As history involves continual change, so God, as an agent within that history, changes as well. These are not contradictory, for God's transcendence is never at odds with his immanence, just as his control and authority never compromise his presence.

Impassability. Scripture ascribes attitudes to God—compassion, tender mercy, patience, rejoicing, delight, pleasure, pity, love, wrath, jealousy—that are generally considered emotions. The notion of segregating one aspect of God's mental content (emotions) into the category of anthropocentrism while regarding other mental faculties (intellect, will) as non-anthropomorphic derives more from Greek metaphysical thought than the Bible. There is no compelling reason to deny the existence of divine emotions. Much of what we call "emotion" in God is his evaluation of and response to the historical series of events that he has ordained. Without emotion, God would lack intellectual capacity, and he would be unable to speak the full truth about himself and the world.

Simplicity. In scholastic terms, divine simplicity means there is no composition in the being of God. Frame seeks to vindicate the truth of divine simplicity, not through Scholasticism's natural theology but by approaching it from a biblical standpoint. Contra Aquinas, Frame argues that this does not preclude complexity or multiplicity in God.

All of God's attributes are not synonymous—rather, they are perspectives on a single reality: God's essence. Praising God's wisdom, for example, is not to praise something other than God himself, but a way of referring to everything that God is. Surprisingly, therefore, we see a proper, practical motive to the doctrine of divine simplicity: a biblical reminder that God's relationship with us is fully personal.

Omnipotence. To put it most simply, God's omnipotence means he can do anything he pleases, and nothing is too hard for him. Of course, God cannot do everything: he cannot perform actions that are logically contradictory, immoral, appropriate only to finite creatures, or that deny his own nature as God. He cannot change his eternal plan or make a stone so large that he cannot lift it. Like Thomas Morris, Ronald Nash, Millard Erickson, and John Feinberg before him, Frame adopts Anthony Kenny's definition that God can do anything that is compatible with his attributes.

Omniscience. Divine omniscience may be defined as God's knowledge of all actual and possible states of affairs, and/or the truth value of all propositions. The extent of God's knowledge is as broad as his lordship. God plans and ordains all things; therefore, *a fortiori*, he also knows all things. Since Frame denies libertarian free will, he abandons middle knowledge. While he affirms God's knowledge of the possible actions of possible and actual creatures, he sees no reason to distinguish God's knowledge of contingencies from his necessary knowledge of himself, since on the Reformed view, the former is a subset of the latter.

Exploration of the divine attributes is, of course, a hot topic among today's philosophers. But, as Richard Muller recently wrote regarding Scholastics, "The philosophers appear to have even more interest than the various schools of modern theologians in using (and frequently distorting) the history for contemporary ends: a typical pattern of argument is the presentation of a partial picture or a caricature of the scholastic teaching for the sake of more easily dismissing it in favor of a modern alternative" (*Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003] 3.23). The same thing is often true, unfortunately, regarding the representation of contemporary evangelical-Calvinistic thought. One hopes that the work of Frame—along with that of John Feinberg (*No One Like Him* [Wheaton: Crossway, 2001])—even if it does not convince, will demonstrate that contemporary Calvinistic theologians know their way around a philosophical argument, have taken the criticisms seriously, and can present creative solutions that illumine, rather than compromise, large strands of the biblical witness.

How does Frame's *Doctrine of God* compare to other recent works in the field? In some senses, it is unfair to compare it with other one-volume, conservative evangelical treatments—such as those by Thomas Morris, Ronald Nash, Gerald Bray, and Millard Erickson—due to the sheer length of Frame's work. But it does invite inevitable comparison to John Feinberg's *No One Like Him*. Both are nearly 900 pages long (though Feinberg's work, with smaller print, is about 30% longer than Frame's), both were published at virtually the same time, both authors write from an evangelical-Calvinist perspective, and neither is shy about correcting historical traditions they judge to be unbiblical. They do differ, however, in methodology and intent. I would categorize Feinberg's work as primarily a philosophical theology with extended biblical surveys and extensive interaction with the unbiblical alternatives of process theism and open theism. Feinberg also has an enviable mastery of the literature and an ability to exhaust every angle of a doctrine or philosophic problem under consideration. Frame's work is different by intention. Though a professor of philosophy, this is first and foremost a theological textbook, the driving concern of which is a biblical exposition of covenant lordship. Philosophical problems and unbiblical alternatives, though always considered, are not dealt with in extensive detail so as not to distract from this fundamental aim. At the end of the day, Feinberg and Frame often arrive at similar con-

clusions. I see these as distinct yet complementary resources for which we can be most grateful.

What are the weaknesses of Frame's work? Due to its size and the controversial subject matter, individual disagreements and differences of judgment are to be expected. To cite a few quibbles: (1) I find it inconsistent to deny that this is the best of all possible worlds while simultaneously maintaining that God is good, wise, and the sovereign ordainer of all that comes to pass. (2) Frame's both/and solution to the issue of God being atemporal versus everlasting—a solution that is independent of but similar to the one proposed by Millard Erickson in *God the Father Almighty*—seems to be on the right track, but it stands in need of further development and explanation to address unanswered questions. (3) I wish that Frame had included a chapter on the existence of God. He considered doing so but decided against it because he has written on this elsewhere and the book was already too large. In my view, however, such an extensive work, which will serve as a standard reference for many, should have included such a chapter, especially considering that Frame's apologetic and epistemological methodology is relatively rare among evangelicals. Though I appreciated the thirty-seven pages of republished book reviews, an additional chapter would probably have been more profitable. (4) Finally, there are times when Frame's triadic arrangement—sometimes containing triads within triads within triads!—can make the macrostructure a bit difficult to follow. Though I do find the arrangement fascinating and ultimately helpful, it also runs the risk of being pedagogically distracting, losing the forest for the trees.

These relatively minor criticisms, though, do not in any way dampen my enthusiasm for this work. Frame's ultimate concern is to ask and answer what the Bible tells us today about the doctrine of God. In my judgment, the accomplishment of this task was eminently successful. Frame's answers are true, clear, and edifying. The lasting impression at the end of the study is that Frame has carefully mined the treasure of Scripture and sought to convey his discoveries to us. The result is pedagogically creative and biblically faithful; profound and yet clear; cognizant of contemporary trends but desirous of conveying the timeless truth and tenor of God's self-revelation. May the Lord use it to strengthen the church as it worships its covenant Lord.

Justin Taylor

Desiring God Ministries, Minneapolis, MN

Encountering the Holy Spirit: Paths of Christian Growth and Service. By French L. Arrington. Cleveland, TN: Pathway, 2003, 546 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Pastors, students in Bible colleges, and educated laypeople who want a practical and reliable account of how the Holy Spirit is currently operating in fulfillment of New Testament prophecy might consider professor Arrington's new guide a "must read." Scholars also will find the work profitable, seeing that the domain of the Holy Spirit, especially the gift of the Holy Spirit to disciple-believer-witnesses who pray earnestly for this empowering gift, is in need of further clarification. Given several centuries of confusion following the Lukan cessationism of the Reformers, further embellished in the evangelical traditions, fresh approaches are in order. Building on the past century of scholarship and experience in the Pentecostal tradition, together with that in the various charismatic renewal movements among the Orthodox, Roman Catholics, and increasing blocks of Protestantism, Arrington sweeps away a good bit of the ecclesiastical fog surrounding a vital and timely topic. Here we have a realistic guide for practicing

Christians who want to use their Bible in an understandable and accurate manner, becoming cognizant of a budding scholarly tradition within the Pentecostal reformation, now the fastest growing sector of world Christendom.

Beginning with “The Witness of the Old Testament to the Holy Spirit,” Arrington reviews with thoughtful precision the activities of the Spirit, focusing especially upon the prophecy of Joel. We live in a time of prophetic fulfillment, according to Arrington, when God is fulfilling this prophecy in its entirety, as cited at Acts 2:16–21. In addition we are offered a rich review of all the OT references to the Holy Spirit along with a guide for discussion. Judiciously placed throughout *Encountering the Holy Spirit*, these discussion guides make this book especially suitable for use by small groups of Spirit-filled believers on the mission field and in local churches.

In “Encountering the Holy Spirit in Conversion,” we see how the Spirit helps convict us of sin, bringing repentance, faith, forgiveness, salvation (as in the soteriological nexus of Luke’s portrayal), and incorporation into the body of Christ (as in Paul’s description). One might also infer a personal relationship of repentant sinners to the Father, given the parable of the prodigal son. From the examples and precedents recorded in the Gospels, this particular ministry of the Spirit began during the ministry of the earthly Jesus (so, too, William P. Atkinson, “The Prior Work of the Spirit in Luke’s Portrayal,” *Australasian Pentecostal Studies* 5–6 [2001] 107–14; and Youngmo Cho, “Spirit and Kingdom in Luke-Acts: Proclamation as the Primary Role of the Spirit in Relation to the Kingdom of God in Luke-Acts,” *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 6/2 [2003] 173–97) and continues today. Arrington develops the early Christian concept of walking in the Spirit, a metaphor for experiential (including non-rational) personal fellowship with God, as leading to spiritual fruit and righteousness. All Pentecostals, neo-Pentecostals or charismatics, and evangelicals will benefit from the deeper grasp of our relationship with the Spirit that this section provides.

The central section of the book is focused on Spirit baptism. Given the Pentecostal/charismatic reformation’s phenomenal growth over the past century, it behooves global Pentecostalism to once again articulate the tenets of the fourfold or fivefold gospel with substance and clarity. One of these prophecy-fulfilling tenets, proclaimed over the past century as an integral part of the gospel, is the role of the heavenly Jesus as Baptizer in the Holy Spirit. Arrington offers a substantial and stimulating pastoral grounding in this matter. Evangelicals who may be looking for a more accurate understanding of the Scriptures from a Pentecostal perspective than they have traditionally been offered may find this presentation especially helpful.

Rightly dismissing the old Protestant Reformation-based popularization that the gift of the Holy Spirit in Jesus’ teaching on prayer (Luke 11:2–4, with the presumptuous erasure of 11:5–13) was only intended for the twelve apostles and that its initial benefit then somehow theoretically trickles down to all future generations, Arrington implies that such dispensational theories only shape an epochal Jesus, not the earthly and heavenly Jesus portrayed in Luke-Acts. Given that the heavenly Jesus remembers and supports the ministry of the earthly Jesus, such dispensational popularizations are far removed from the intentions of the NT writers, according to Arrington. He sketches out a set of instructive interpretive principles and shows that 1 Cor 13:12 refers to “baptism by the Holy Spirit into Christ at conversion” (p. 103). This figurative description is not to be confused with Paul’s language of Spirit-reception (see Paul at 1 Cor. 2:12 and Luke at Acts 2:38; 19:2). Then, the various delicate descriptions Luke employs for Christians being baptized in or with the Holy Spirit by the heavenly Jesus are helpfully tabulated (p. 109). These correlate nicely with Paul’s language. Arrington’s approach affords readers the opportunity to perceive how the early Christians developed and commonly employed experientially descriptive language, language that allowed them to communi-

cate effectively among themselves. Pentecostals might share more of this important message of NT connectedness. Another value of Arrington's work may be to help evangelicals come out from under the confusing camouflage of the ecclesiastically self-serving dictums of "apostolic age" interpretation and into the clarity of communication that the early Christian communities apparently enjoyed due to a commonly shared experientially-based language.

The treatment of "Spiritual Empowerment After Conversion" and "Initial Physical Sign of Spirit Baptism" offers a thorough, accurate, and easily understandable account of what Luke intends us to realize and personally apply. Luke renders the belief that the prophetic fulfillment of John the Baptist's prophecy (Luke 3:16), and Jesus' own encouragement toward its realization (Luke 11:5-13; 24:48; Acts 1:4, 5, 8), is now an ongoing promise to all disciple-believer-witnesses, to those who hear the gospel and repent (Acts 2:38-39). From the examples and precedents recorded in Acts, we see the heavenly Jesus fulfilling the prophecy of Joel as coupled with the teaching and narrative prediction of the earthly Jesus, and also coupled to the narrative prediction of John the Baptist. This ministry of the heavenly Jesus continues today according to prophetic prediction. Although scholarship may certainly anticipate more work along these lines, Arrington's treatment reveals this exciting personal application of ongoing prophetic fulfillment. His narrative investigation quite appropriately encourages determined prayer.

In "The Reception and Results of Spirit Baptism," we learn how our experience of Spirit-filling and inspired prophetic speech in unlearned languages is designed to provide more boldness to witness for Christ. This mysterious increase in our ability for personal witness, and increased appreciation of the non-rational dimension of the Holy Spirit, of course varies with each individual according to God's will. Each current disciple-believer-witness, as Luke describes Christians at the end of his Gospel, may be empowered today by a "personal Pentecost" so as to increase his or her personal witness, given due obedience to the earthly Jesus' teaching on prayer. This personal Pentecost is a prophetic heritage for all believers. Arrington's pastoral study may serve to lessen the possible fear of the supernatural and facilitate understanding as to why speaking in unlearned languages (other tongues) is a good sign of Spirit-filling from the heavenly Jesus. This Spirit-filling as described by Luke leads to desirable experiential consequences in our spiritual life, to a deeper appreciation of his interior presence, thus helping us to work *with* the Lord to expand and make real his everlasting kingdom.

Arrington's next section, "Introduction to Gifts of the Spirit," is an appreciated counterbalance to a current trend in some evangelical quarters that "all the Pauline spiritual gifts are for today." Such an admission, after centuries of denial by the Protestant Reformation tradition, is often theoretical or diplomatic, not a practical, pastorally-applicable statement. Participants in the Pentecostal reformation should not be swayed by such potentially misleading trends taken out of biblical context, trends which may come and which may also quite easily go along with renewed efforts to protect ecclesiastical positions, but instead should adhere to the entire NT context as Arrington wisely does.

In "Personal Stories of Encounters With the Holy Spirit," we find a charming collection of personal testimonies that is both edifying and entertaining in the best Christian sense. Unlearned prophetic speech is understood and applied. Spirit-filling and its mysterious empowerment have practical consequences in the Christian life of a housewife. The Spirit guides missionary work in the inner city. Dreams, visions, and healings accompany missionary endeavor. This is the voice of the genuine prophetic tradition amidst suffering and struggle. This is why, for example, 90% of all Protestantism in Central/South America is Pentecostal. When the blinding constraints of rationalism and

materialism are removed, and the heavenly Jesus is sought persistently in prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit according to the teaching of the earthly Jesus, then a host of personal stories inevitably burst forth among the bands of disciple-believer-witnesses around the world.

As we engage in the task of evangelizing the world, we need to encourage young people to consider the call to the mission field and not be ashamed of credible personal testimony related thereto (as, for example, in the account of Elva Vanderbout by Julie C. Ma, *When the Spirit Meets the Spirits* [Studien zur interkulturellen Geschichte des Christentums 118; Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 2000] 74–86). Similarly, reading Arrington's accounting of personal stories and his "Challenges for the Spirit-Filled Church Today" could be a tonic to faith and a motivation to get back to the basics. *Encountering the Holy Spirit* offers many revitalizing and stimulating thoughts that can assist its readers to become better, more obedient Christians, combining accurate biblical guidance with much needed practical resolve.

Paul Elbert

Church of God Theological Seminary, Cleveland, TN

A History of Lutheranism. By Eric W. Gritsch. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002, 346 pp., \$29.00 paper. *Documents from the History of Lutheranism 1517–1750.* Edited by Eric Lund. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002, 330 pp., \$30.00 paper.

Oscar Handlin opened his classic book *Uprooted* with the observation that he once began to write a history of immigration in America and then soon realized that he was writing a history of America. Eric Gritsch could rightfully make a similar observation about Lutheranism and the history of the Western world since the Reformation. Far from being a mere sub-topic or side-show in Western religious history, it is a major topic in its own right; the sheer scope of the undertaking is daunting. Gritsch notes that, to date, no one has attempted (or perhaps dared) to write a history of global Lutheranism. Though the field of international Calvinism has attracted many scholars, the same is not true of global Lutheranism. Gritsch, however, does not claim originality in this book. He calls it a sequel to a book he co-authored with Robert Jensen entitled, *Lutheranism: The Theological Movement and Its Confessional Writings* (1976).

Gritsch organizes his history around two themes, the catholicity and ecumenical implications of Lutheranism, and its global spread. This first theme allows the author to "take sides" while purporting to tell the story of Lutheranism. Gritsch never misses an opportunity to criticize Spiritualists, Enthusiasts, Zwinglians, and Calvinists. Later in the book Gritsch is fond of dismissing Missouri Synod Lutherans (and any others affirming the literal inspiration of Scripture) as fundamentalists. While he does mention 2 Tim 3:16, Gritsch informs us that the "notion of the inspiration of the Bible is rooted in Hellenistic Jewish thought" (p.122). Furthermore, his coverage of the Counter or Catholic Reformation places the Roman Church in the best possible light. By contrast, his analysis of John Calvin, Theodore Beza, and Puritanism is couched in the worst possible terms. For example, Gritsch cannot mention Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper without the pejorative label "Aristotelian." Gritsch's ecumenism is thus more likely to include Catholicism than significant Protestant groups. This is the case despite the fact that at Trent the Roman Church called the idea of justification by faith alone "erroneous teaching" (p. 84). Not to be deterred, Gritsch wishes to look forward and not to the past. At the same time, the author's analysis is not completely partisan. For ex-

ample, he does not ignore Luther's inflammatory writings against the peasants or Thomas Müntzer. Gritsch admits that Luther relied upon rumors and did not study the writings of the Swiss Brethren or the Anabaptists.

Gritsch's second emphasis on global Lutheranism succeeds modestly. A map claims a world population of 64 million Lutherans with 37 million in Europe. Can we say that the sun never sets on the Lutheran flag (or seal)? Lutheranism is in fact widespread, but it is also spread rather thin in many spots; thus, if it is global, it is with a very small "g." Culturally, however, Lutheranism can boast stunning achievements. It began as a reform movement and grew as a reform and educational movement. The Lutheran humanist Michael Agricola essentially created Finnish literature and invented his own orthography in the 1540s. In the 1780s Paul Egede produced an Eskimo grammar and a New Testament to aid Lutheran mission work. The cultural contributions of Lutherans and other Protestants were profoundly evident after the Thirty Years War (1648) through the genius of Rembrandt, John Milton, Christopher Wren, and J. S. Bach. This creative genius operated out of a context that Gritsch rightly calls a hunger for order after the devastating religious wars.

Gritsch is not certain how to assess the historical and theological significance of the Pietist movement. Though the pioneers considered themselves "faithful disciples of Luther," Gritsch is wary of some of their radical tendencies. Pietism, however, earned a distinctive place in cultural history for its educational and missions outreach. August Herman Francke dreamed that he might spread the principles of Pietism to every part of the globe. Graduates and disciples of Halle Pietism largely fulfilled Francke's dream. If one includes the subsequent awakenings in England, the European continent, and North America within the orbit of Pietism, Francke's dream (and Gritsch's theme of globalism) takes on greater significance. Count Zinzendorf represents the radical side of Pietism that Gritsch disparages. He notes that a trait of Zinzendorf's mind was a tendency to swing the pendulum further than necessary (p. 152). Attempting to place him and the Pietist movement in a larger context, Gritsch offers the fascinating contrast between Baroque culture, with its excessive emotion and ornamentation, and the eccentric exaggerations of Zinzendorf. Perhaps in an honest effort toward objectivity, the author appears more interested in the extremes of a given movement than in the movement itself.

Gritsch repeats the cliché that Pietism emphasized a religion of the heart over against professors with doctorates in theology and created a rich, variegated intellectual tradition. Gritsch reminds us that John Arndt's book, *True Christianity*, was the most popular book in and beyond the seventeenth century, a fact that attests to the profound cultural significance of Pietism in and beyond Lutheran circles. Several Pietists found that Lutherans questioned their fidelity to Lutheran confessions. One such Lutheran was Henry Melchoir Muhlenburg, a graduate of Halle who complained that orthodox Lutheran "preachers tried to adhere to the unaltered Augsburg Confession with unaltered hearts" (p. 177). Muhlenburg anticipated the rift that later developed between revivalists and confessionalists.

Like other immigrant churches, Lutherans struggled in North America with competing allegiances to church and state, as well as with ethnic and doctrinal issues. These schisms, splits, and factions provide an additional theme running through Gritsch's book. He records some of the extreme examples of conservative Lutherans who staunchly resisted any mixed marriages with Calvinists (something that they considered akin to mating cows with horses). The immigrants' native language also provided occasional obstacles to assimilation. For example, a German-American pastor opined in a sermon that English could not carry "pure doctrine" as accurately as could the German language.

Lutheranism in the twentieth century often found its message co-opted, twisted, and misappropriated for ideological purposes. For example, Germans used Luther's writings to buttress and defend the war effort in World War One. When Germany celebrated the four hundredth anniversary of the *Ninety-Five Theses*, Luther appeared as a military hero dressed in full battle armor. In the Second World War, Hitler paraded Luther's violent anti-Jewish writings as an apologetic for Germany's hatred of Jews. The small number of pastors who refused to sign an oath of allegiance to Hitler and the Nazi government suffered even to the point of death. Closer to our own day, Luther's ideas were used (or twisted) to promote liberation theology. In America, Lutherans faced serious hostility from their fellow citizens during the wars. These Lutheran-Americans were sometimes depicted as the enemy because of their direct or indirect German connections. Perhaps it is the trauma of the last century that guided Professor Gritsch in his attraction to ecumenism. If this is true, then we are witnesses to a kind of Whig history where the past is viewed through the lens of present history. Gritsch knows how the story came out, and his emphasis on unity is perhaps an effort to claim that this catholicity was the real goal of Luther and Melancthon from the beginning of the movement in the early sixteenth century. Gritsch's treatment of Lutheranism is compelling because he takes seriously the raw material of history, philosophy, theology, and cultural analysis. The nexus of these fields in a denominational history is much more than we might expect. What John T. McNeill did for the Reformed community in *The History and Character of Calvinism*, Eric W. Gritsch has now achieved for Lutheranism.

Eric Lund's book, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism 1517–1750*, provides an attractive intellectual complement to Gritsch's history. Its chronology is more limited in scope, with the greatest emphasis on the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, arguably the most important period for confessional writing. However, Lund's selection of confessional statements leaves much to be desired. Gritsch whetted my appetite to read these confessional texts, but more often than not these statements were not to be found in Lund's contribution. Nonetheless, his book does have two strengths—Lund's contextual analysis, and the availability of Lutheran writings from the Reformation era. In both books, the postage stamp size images and the poor reproductive quality detracts from otherwise attractive volumes. Despite these weaknesses, both deserve a place in the classroom and in our libraries for reference purposes.

Dale Walden Johnson
Erskine Theological Seminary, Due West, SC

Divine Discourse: The Theological Methodology of John Owen. By Sebastian Rehnman. Texts and Studies in Reformation and Post-Reformation Thought. Richard A. Muller, gen. ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002, 224 pp., \$19.99.

John Owen was a prominent Puritan theologian who served as chaplain to Oliver Cromwell and as vice-chancellor at Oxford University. He has been the subject of several monographs over recent years. This volume focuses on one aspect of his theological system: his prolegomena to theology. In this revision of his doctoral dissertation at Oxford, Sebastian Rehnman follows the methodology of Richard Muller, the general editor of this series, in arguing for essential continuity between medieval, Reformation, and post-Reformation thought on the particularly important doctrine of prolegomena. Prolegomena sets the state for one's entire theological system and addresses such important concepts as the relationship between theology and philosophy and the very nature

of theology itself. As a result, this topic is an essential one for testing the basic aspects of Muller's thesis of continuity.

Muller defines scholasticism as a method of writing theology, and most Reformed theologians followed the *loci* or topical method in keeping with the medieval pattern set by such standard works as Lombard's *Sententiae*. Owen certainly shared in this use of the *loci* method, but he did not use it throughout the entire corpus of his writings, especially in his major text on prolegomena, his *Theologoumena*. According to Rehman, Owen typically employed a "federal" model more consistently because he was distrustful of an overemphasis on reason in theological discourse. This model focused on the covenant relationship between God and his people. Owen argued that, although revelation was progressive, the knowledge necessary to be saved must be consistent throughout the ages. Here, the covenant served as the basis for understanding theology and for the continuity between the testaments. This explains, in part, the strong emphasis among the federal theologians on the use of typologies in the OT. In his use of the federal model, Owen sought to be more biblical and less systematic.

Rehman points out that Owen viewed the covenant as unilateral in origin but bilateral in execution. Covenant history, as it unfolds in Scripture, revolves around three principles: (1) faith in the Mediator; (2) obedience to the moral law; and (3) adherence to divinely appointed worship.

The author goes on to say that one must view Owen's prolegomena in the wider context of his assimilation of patristic and medieval sources. Rehman argues that medieval prolegomena was mediated to the Reformed scholastics by such theologians as Junius and Polanus who began their discussions with a section on the etymology of theology. This discussion begins with the history and definition of the term *theologia*. The ancient Greeks used the term *theologoumena* to describe discourses about God, a definition that provided a foundation for Christian usage.

On the topic of natural theology, Owen followed the Reformed pattern of limiting its scope, noting that after the fall, man is incapable of coming to a saving knowledge on his own. Owen does not, however, totally denigrate the use of reason. One can come to an understanding of God's existence through reason and can conclude that one must be obedient to God. Philosophy that is unaided by divine revelation, however, is severely limited because of human depravity. Revelation serves the purpose of rendering people inexcusable; therefore, they need supernatural theology that comes via Scripture. Philosophy, however, can be redeemed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and reason thus redeemed can be very useful in biblical exegesis and in making theological judgments based on the clear teaching of the Bible. Owen was very careful to avoid what he considered to be the abuse of reason in theology; he was particularly critical of the Socinians in this regard. This abuse is especially acute when philosophy begins to rule over the articles of faith.

In typical Reformed fashion, Owen placed a great deal of emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming the authority of Scripture. He argued that the Spirit was the "efficient cause" of belief in Scripture rather than the objective reason why people believe it. Furthermore, people need the Holy Spirit because of the noetic effects of the fall. One of the potential criticisms of the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming that authority of Scripture is that it is a circular argument, because it is Scripture itself that teaches the role of the Holy Spirit in confirming its own authority. Owen followed Francis Turretin in pointing out the value of the marks of Scripture to show its self-authenticating nature. The marks of Scripture's divine origin are valid, however, only for those who believe.

One of the real strengths of the book is the author's ability to compare and contrast Owen's positions on various aspects of prolegomena with other contemporary Reformed dogmatists. The author displays a mastery of the primary literature in this regard

and is therefore able to place Owen's thought into a wider context. For anyone interested in the development of post-Reformation Reformed thought, this book should be required reading.

Martin I. Klauber
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, IL

Lesslie Newbigin: A Theological Life. By Geoffrey Wainwright. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, xiii + 459 pp., \$60.00.

Lesslie Newbigin is well known among a broad spectrum of Christians due to his contributions in the areas of missiology, apologetics, and ecumenical activities. He was influential in the World Council of Churches, as a missionary and bishop in India, and as a critic of Western secular thought and culture. Most of his admirers know of one or two areas in which he made contributions but are only vaguely familiar with the broader scope of Newbigin's life and thought. It is to address the need for a comprehensive understanding of Newbigin that Geoffrey Wainwright offers his biography. He subtitles the book *A Theological Life* because Newbigin lived a life of "faith, hope, and love . . . the three theological virtues" (p. vi). His goal is to show how Newbigin lived out his theology through his ministry. The book is, however, more a summary of Newbigin's thought than a treatment of the events of his life. Wainwright is an admirer of Newbigin and regards him as a fully orthodox Christian who embodied all that is best, genuine, and biblical in Christianity. His treatment is often laudatory rather than critical. Wainwright even compares Newbigin to the Church fathers in "stature and range" (p. v) because he successfully integrated thought and practice in his work as bishop.

Wainwright summarizes Newbigin's life in the first chapter, then treats his thought under ten topics that characterized Newbigin throughout his life (though some were more important at some stages than others). Wainwright looks at Newbigin as a believer, an evangelist, an advocate of ecumenism, a bishop, a missionary strategist, an interlocutor of other religions, a visionary, a preacher, a teacher, and an apologist. These are treated in the order in which each theme was most prominent for Newbigin. Wainwright ends with an assessment of Newbigin's place in history.

This review will concentrate on just three of the more significant chapters. Many know Newbigin primarily as a missiologist due to his articles in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* and elsewhere. Wainwright points out how Newbigin, as a young missionary in India, quickly recognized flaws in traditional missions strategy, according to which missionaries live in a compound, remote from the people, and where the churches remain dependent on the missionaries. Newbigin advocated missionaries being partners with local church leaders, even serving under them in carrying out the mission of the church.

Wainwright lays out accurately the Trinitarian dimension of Newbigin's missional thinking. Newbigin emphasized that missions begins with the Father sending the Son, and later their sending the Spirit. Following this formula, the church identifies with those to whom it bears witness. Wainwright emphasizes that for Newbigin missions was essential for the church even to be the church.

Wainwright surveys the development of Newbigin's thought regarding the encounter between Christianity and the claims of other religions in the chapter entitled "The Religious Interlocutor." Newbigin "remained constant in his attachment to the comprehensiveness, centrality, and finality of Jesus Christ" (p. 204). Christ, for Newbigin,

was the “clue” to all of history and to God’s purposes in the world. However, Newbigin asserted that dialogue with those of other faiths might result in “converting both partners in the dialogue” (p. 229). Newbigin believed that our knowledge of God’s purposes is partial and that one source of additional information, beyond the Scriptures, may come in the encounter with those who call into question our beliefs. Wainwright recognizes that there is tension here between Newbigin’s desire for dialogue and his insistence that the cross is in some a non-negotiable, but Wainwright does not develop the matter. Nor does he seem to recognize that in later years Newbigin moved towards an inclusive understanding of salvation—the belief that God may save some who do not have faith in Jesus Christ. This change in Newbigin’s later thought is recorded, but Wainwright does not discuss the significance of the change.

It was as an apologist that Newbigin made his mark in the last years of his life, though it had been a part of what he was doing from the beginning. Wainwright finds apologetic concerns expressed in Newbigin’s writings even from his student days. Newbigin’s basic approach—to challenge the world to see reality in light of Scripture and the cross—existed at that early time, as Wainwright makes clear.

Wainwright recognizes the importance of Newbigin’s major apologetic work *Foolishness to the Greeks* as the best summary of his critique of Western thought and of his call to the church to bring the gospel boldly into the marketplace of ideas. He also is aware of differences of purpose and scope in various apologetic writings by Newbigin. He recognizes that Newbigin’s “narrative and judgments may appear unnuanced,” but contrastingly affirms that they are possessed of “that clarity and sharpness which characterizes the insights and vision of pioneers and prophets” (p. 355).

It is in this apologetic section that Wainwright’s lack of a critical eye once again becomes a problem. Some note that Newbigin’s critique of the West focused too much on science as the foundation of all truth, as if nineteenth-century romanticism had never happened. Wainwright could have expanded upon this. In addition, evangelicals reading Newbigin are often disturbed that, amid his ringing call for “the conversion of the West” and for the gospel to be proclaimed in the marketplace, there were some odd lapses. His move toward inclusivism in salvation, for example, is strange given his insistence on the cross as central to history. Also, Newbigin treated the Bible as a human book, the best interpretation of God’s actions and purposes written by those who were witnesses to them, rather than as God’s own Word to humanity. This understanding of salvation and the Bible is consistent with mainline theology, Newbigin’s milieu, but it is odd when juxtaposed with his understanding of the universal significance of Christ and the biblical worldview. Wainwright might have noted this tension even if he himself might be inclined to agree theologically with Newbigin.

Wainwright’s book has value in that it brings together and summarizes a lifetime of Newbigin’s thought in many areas. Those who have known him mainly as a missiologist or apologist will find new areas of Newbigin’s thought to explore, and all will gain a deep appreciation of his total significance. In addition, for the first time there is available to the next generation of scholars a comprehensive survey of Newbigin’s thought in one volume. Wainwright’s book will be the starting place for Newbigin studies for some time to come.

C. Fred Smith
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX
The Criswell College, Dallas, TX

Darwin's Proof: The Triumph of Religion Over Science. By Cornelius G. Hunter. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2003, 168 pp., \$17.99. *Doubts About Darwin: A History of Intelligent Design.* By Thomas Woodward. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, 303 pp., \$19.99.

The religious nature of Darwinian cosmology is of growing interest today. This theory about the origin of life has always been debated, but increasingly the focus is on the religious presuppositions behind its claims. While previous criticisms of Darwinism were usually side-stepped by its adherents as mistaken literal readings of Genesis, these new criticisms are more devastating. They call into question the very method used by Darwinists to arrive at conclusions while presenting more coherent interpretations of the empirical evidence. One author who is calling into question the presuppositions of Darwinism is Cornelius Hunter. As a post-doc in molecular biophysics, he is not a newcomer to the area of scientific research. His books *Darwin's God: Evolution and the Problem of Evil* and the current *Darwin's Proof* focus on the assumptions about God behind Darwin's theory and what a possible alternative theory would look like. Thomas Woodward has provided a history of the intelligent design movement that focuses not only on the major persons and ideas but also on how scientific persuasion takes place. The importance of this for evangelical theology is that it is the evangelist's duty to be a witness to the clarity of God's existence. As Paul states: "God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). A review of these two books reveals some main issues in the debate. The ongoing controversy between Darwinism and alternative creation accounts has gone on for some time without resolution, indicating that presuppositions are not being addressed. Among these are the non-empirical nature of questions about origins, the clarity of God's existence, and the need for an answer to the problem of evil. It is the goal of this review to look at these issues and the contributions to this subject made by these two books.

Hunter's book is another thoughtful look at the religious presuppositions behind Darwinian cosmology. His aim in this book is to argue that Darwinism is wrong and to offer an alternative position. His argument includes a look at the design in cells and at the specious reasoning behind much of the proof used to support Darwinism. As a molecular biologist, Hunter contributes fascinating and accessible information about the detailed workings of cells. He joins the many contemporary voices that are exposing the manner in which non-empirical interpretive frameworks are used, in the name of science, to support Darwinism. He also calls attention to the religious presuppositions behind Darwinism, summed up in the claim that "God would not have made the world this way." Hunter's contribution is to show how most of the arguments used by Darwinists assume this. This is a theological assertion, not an empirically-derived truth. It assumes a great deal about the nature of God, how God works in the creation, and the nature of good and evil. Darwinism is not neutral, but is itself one worldview among others.

While attacks on Darwinism abound, the perception is that there is no viable alternative and therefore it is better to stay on the sinking ship. This is the fallacy of "appeal to ignorance" that states that a position is true until it has been proven false. Hunter takes away this excuse by providing an alternative. While his alternative has similarities with intelligent design theory, it also includes reference to the fall of mankind. That is, the world as it is seen today is not the way it was created. While the world was created very good, natural evil was imposed by God after the fall; therefore, any interpretive method that assumes things have always been as we see them today is faulty. Darwinism assumes that there has always been natural evil in the world and then argues that God would not have made a world like this. This is begging the ques-

tion, however. Notice that neither interpretive method (creation/fall/redemption; naturalism) is empirical. This means that this is not a scientific question (where science is construed as the pursuit of empirical data). Hunter's book makes an important contribution in pointing this out.

Woodward's book, as the subtitle specifies, is a history of the intelligent design movement. His focus is more than history, however; it is the assertion that the narrative of the intelligent design movement serves as an integrating and motivating factor in the rhetorical pursuits of the movement. The book focuses on the originating figures in the movement, such as Michael Denton, Phillip Johnson, Michael Behe, and William Dembski. However, the theme that is followed throughout is a look at how rhetoric played a key role in the advancement of this movement. Woodward especially looks at the ethos of the main characters, the need for scientific credibility, and a certain amount of distancing from creationism. What this contributes is an analysis of how the credentials of Darwinism were questioned and how the intelligent design movement grew in acceptability. There is something to be learned from these methods. However, there is not as much focus on the actual arguments as in Hunter's books. While Woodward does provide a detailed look at how a paradigm shift is occurring, not as much time is spent on whether the shift is from a false paradigm to a true paradigm. In theory, one could switch a false worldview for another false worldview and still have failed to know the clear truth about God. What is of special interest, therefore, is how we move from falsehood to truth. Even so, Woodward's book does make an important contribution as a historical look at the intelligent design movement and how rhetoric played a part in its advancement.

These books join many others on a growing list of critiques of the Darwinian cosmology. The questions are directed at the presuppositions of Darwinism and at exposing its naturalistic assumptions. As noted above, however, there is a need not just to move from the false worldview of Darwinism to some other worldview, but to the truth. As over-extended materialism plays itself out, culture has a tendency to replace it with over-extended supernaturalism. Yet neither of these comes close to the clear general revelation of God's eternal power and divine nature or to the biblical worldview of creation, fall, and redemption. Perhaps some principles can be kept in mind to help avoid making a jump to a false worldview.

First, as Hunter points out in his books, the issue is not of an empirical nature. Naturalism has claimed empiricism as the only viable epistemology only to go beyond the bounds of empiricism in making statements about the origin of life. Questions about origins are not empirical, and therefore should not be addressed on empirical grounds. What needs to be brought to the surface is the interpretive framework in which the scientist is operating. While the data can be the same, two different frameworks will provide two different explanations of this data. The issue thus becomes, which worldview is one going to hold? Because one's worldview is that by which one interprets evidence, empiricism (evidence) cannot help answer this question.

Second, Christianity claims that it is evident that God exists; that is, God's eternal power and divine nature are clearly seen from the things that are made (Romans 1:20). This means that there is no excuse for believing that something besides God is eternal (without beginning). The naturalist's assumption that all events must be given a material explanation is a contradiction of the clarity of God's existence. The Christian should be able to show this—that it is not true that matter has always existed but was instead created by God. This act of creation means that there is at least one event that cannot be given a material explanation. And if it is true that natural evil entered the world after the original creation, then there are more events that cannot be given a material explanation.

Third, answers about origins involve an attempt to give a theodicy or at least to answer the question, "How did things get to be the way they are?" As Hunter demonstrates, the central interpretive assumption for Darwin was that "God would not have made the world this way"; therefore, he sought after another mechanism. But why not assume that the world has not always been as we see it today? The argument seems to run as follows: If God is perfect in power, then he *could* make a world without evil. If God is perfect in goodness, then he *would* make a world without evil. If God *could* and *would* make a world without evil, then he must have done so. This means that the original creation was very good, free from evil. Yet now we see that the world is full of misery and wickedness. The biblical explanation of this reality is that there was a point in history where humanity went from not having sinned to having sinned, and that God imposed natural evil on the creation. There is no need, therefore, to distance God from creation or to remove God from creation; rather, the existence of natural evil speaks of God's activity in history. In this sense one can agree that the world would not have originally been as it is today without looking for some intermediary step between God and creation. The problem with Darwin's assumption (God would not have made the world this way) is that he does not go far enough and see how the fall affected the creation. One of Hunter's important assertions is that to fail to recognize God's providence in natural evil is to fail to understand God's eternal power and divine nature. Hunter provides a cogent look at the relationship between the original creation and the fall and at different views of God's nature.

In conclusion, these two books offer important insights into the continuing debate about origins. Cornelius Hunter points out the religious assumptions about God that are behind the Darwinian cosmology. Thomas Woodward gives a history of the intelligent design movement and, of specific interest here, shows how evidence is understood in light of pre-existing interpretive frameworks and how rhetoric plays a role in the discussion of origins and scientific theory. The challenge of both of these works is clear for the evangelical theologian. The goal is to take all thoughts captive that raise themselves up against the knowledge of God and not be taken in by worldly philosophies. If the eternal power and divine nature of God are evident, then the theologian should be able to show this and to respond to challenges aimed at the existence and nature of God. In bringing to the surface the fact that this is a debate about the nature of God, Hunter has provided a very beneficial service. By considering the contributions made by these two books and some of the presuppositions in the debate, it is hoped that movement toward unity in truth can be made on the issue of origins and all the other areas of knowledge that this question affects.

Owen Anderson
Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

Kingdom Ethics: Following Jesus in Contemporary Context. By Glen H. Stassen and David P. Gushee. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003, xvi + 538 pp., \$30.00.

In all likelihood, Protestant evangelicals in America will find themselves at a loss when they try to recall a single statement of evangelical ethics so vast and comprehensive as the one articulated by Glen Stassen and David Gushee in *Kingdom Ethics*. The scope of their achievement is dramatic: they present not only a complex and richly textured methodology, but a flexible and variegated application of this method to a wide array of contemporary moral challenges as well. The result is over five hundred pages of an evangelical Christian ethics that, until the present time, had not been given a

single, unified expression. Simply put, Stassen and Gushee's intention in *Kingdom Ethics* is "to let Jesus and especially the Sermon on the Mount set the agenda for Christian ethics" (p. xii). The authors are critical of introductory texts in Christian ethics (and equally of Christian moral advocacy efforts adopted in churches) that do not give sufficient attention to the moral teachings of Jesus as articulated in the Sermon on the Mount. To fill this silence, they present evangelicals with an ethics that focuses on the Sermon in such a way that the teachings and practices of Jesus as expressed in the NT can and should be taken as normative for the very concrete moral challenges Christians face today.

Parts I and II (chaps. 1–6) of *Kingdom Ethics* comprise Stassen and Gushee's moral methodology. Emphasizing the thematic element of the reign of God in the Gospels in general and the Sermon on the Mount in particular, the authors argue that the ethics advocated by Jesus is fundamentally determined by prophetic motifs taken from Isaiah—motifs such as righteousness, peace, joy, healing, and renewal in the Holy Spirit. For Stassen and Gushee, this reign of God is both performative and transformative. It is performative in two senses: first, in that it requires right action of its members, not simply right belief or right thinking; and, second, in the sense that "it is God's performance in which we actively participate" (p. 21). But the kingdom of God is also transformative: its salvation, righteousness, and peace, along with the other prophetic motifs present in its ethics, actually change individuals, communities, nations, and the world. Thus, in order for these prophetic themes of the reign of God to be authentically performative and transformative, they must be "matched by a corresponding ethic of joyful trust linked to sacrificial effort" (p. 29).

Stassen and Gushee are suspicious of attempts in Christian character ethics that are ambivalent about the relationship of gospel virtues to traditional or classical virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. For them, the gospel virtues are oriented toward the goods of "community with God (God's presence and salvation) and community with our fellow human beings (peace and justice)" (p. 53). With this community-shaping notion of virtue in mind, the authors develop a model of holistic character ethics that takes seriously all dimensions of human moral character (i.e. embodiment, reason, basic convictions, passions/loyalties, and perceptions), while also affirming that it is the gospel virtues articulated by Jesus in the Beatitudes that must inform, and in some cases take precedence over, the traditional virtues and other aspects of Christian character. In the end, they find the language of moral norms to be insufficient for a full-fledged Christian ethics, as it feels overly passive and theoretical. Beyond simply articulating moral norms, Stassen and Gushee feel their "central task is to discern which specific *practices* fit the kingdom of God and which attributes of community character are appropriate and fitting for people whose lives are surrendered to God" (p. 122). By resisting the common tendency in Christian ethics to place too much emphasis upon particular judgments, moral rules, and principles, the authors intentionally and successfully avoid becoming mired in too high a degree of theological and ethical abstraction.

Happy, and encouraging for most evangelicals, will be Stassen and Gushee's serious affirmation of *sola scriptura*, in the sense that "Scripture is the only authoritative and fully trustworthy source of authority for Christian ethics" (p. 89). At the same time, the authors are quick to contend that the "prophetic grid" of the Sermon on the Mount should be taken as the hermeneutic key for the rest of the Bible; that is, all other biblical ethics need to be read through the transformative character ethic present in the proclamation of the kingdom of God. According to Stassen and Gushee, Jesus does not teach that a kingdom ethics consists in a set of unattainable ideals but in what they call "transforming initiatives." These move Christians out of the realm of the vicious cycles that result from a sinful, fallen understanding of traditional righteousness and into the realm of transforming and reconciling grace. Stassen's exegesis of the Sermon

on the Mount, in terms of these “transforming initiatives,” adds even more range and texture to the method in *Kingdom Ethics*—it is by far the most important methodological structure for the remainder of the work. But it should be noted that Stassen’s interpretation of the triadic structure of Jesus’ moral teachings (as opposed to the traditional, dyadic structure he identifies with the “high ideals” interpretation of Jesus’ sayings) has yet to stand the test of biblical scholarship. How *Kingdom Ethics* will fare in terms of the reception of its biblical exegesis, and the resulting implications for its conclusions about contemporary moral questions, remains to be seen.

Parts III-VII (chaps. 7–24) of *Kingdom Ethics* consist in the treatment of an extensive range of moral issues in which Stassen and Gushee variously apply their method as developed in Parts I and II. For the most part, the richly textured complexity of their ethical method pays off, as evidenced in its striking flexibility in terms of application to concrete sets of very divergent moral issues. The authors are at their finest when their method comes through most clearly, that is, when the ethics it yields is most in harmony with Jesus’ proclamation of the kingdom of God. The best example of this occurs in chapter 13, “Marriage and Divorce,” in which Stassen and Gushee combine a thoroughgoing biblical exegesis with a compelling analysis of the “vicious cycles” that dominate human male-female relationships in general, and marriage in particular, in contemporary Western society. This method, specifically in terms of the application of the “transforming initiatives” approach, allows them to “focus concretely on *marriage building and divorce prevention* rather than on the development of a sophisticated casuistry of exceptions to the norm of lifetime marriage” (p. 289). Such emphasis on reconciliation in broken relationships—which runs throughout *Kingdom Ethics* and is not confined to this chapter alone—comes as a welcome, refreshing, and much needed re-orientation for evangelical ethics.

If, however, Stassen and Gushee shine most brightly when their applied ethics is in consonance with their method, the reverse is also the case, and critical readers will find not a few moments of dissonance in the text. Chapter 21, “Care of the Creation,” regrettably stands out in this regard. Beginning with a narrative of environmental crisis that includes an apocalyptic assessment borrowed from the *Los Angeles Times*—“Temperatures are getting hotter, and they are getting hotter faster now than at any time in the past” (p. 432)—the chapter almost entirely avoids discussion of the relevance of the Sermon on the Mount to environmental ethics, or of Stassen and Gushee’s moral methodology and its potential application to this complicated set of ethical questions. One of the most surprising recommendations offered in the chapter is the demand that “limiting family size not to what the family can afford but to what the world can afford is a clear moral duty. . . . Ethically appropriate birth control and practices of sexual responsibility are needed ecological practices in our age” (p. 444). Most evangelicals will no doubt balk at such a proposal, not simply because sexual responsibility seems to them to fall outside the realm of environmental ethics, but in large part because the injunction has so little biblical warrant. Beyond this, it seems relatively uninformed by the model of Sermon-based transforming initiatives. The variety of contemporary moral issues covered by Stassen and Gushee fall within this range of consonance and dissonance with respect to their method, giving *Kingdom Ethics* a significant degree of relief, of which its readers will need to be mindful.

While methodological consonance and dissonance rise and fall throughout the work, this is in a certain sense to be expected of a five hundred page-volume of joint authorship. At the same time, it would also seem that at least two other subjects run the course of the book and to varying degrees fall outside the scope of this language of consonance and dissonance. The first of these recurrent subjects is the authors’ nearly constant avail of sociology and social science methods. They contend, for example, that “a good Christian ethicist can discern ethical assumptions that inform methodologies employed

by social scientists for selecting, synthesizing and interpreting data, and can thereby see how to interpret their conclusions critically" (p. 76). Even if we understand Stassen and Gushee here as saying that Christian ethicists should be able to critically interpret the conclusions of social scientists (and not the other way around), it would seem then that every Christian ethicist needs or ought to be a sociologist of some stripe. Moreover, it is arguably the case that an appeal to social science actually weakens any theological description of human moral action, because its presuppositions, data, and conclusions necessarily describe human motivation, action, and social structures in a way that cannot admit the vantage point of Christian theology. Evangelicals will want to take seriously the question of the degree to which social science should be allowed to permeate their ethics, and *Kingdom Ethics* may prove itself the ground upon which such a debate might take place.

A second recurrent subject of which readers will assuredly take note is the authors' repeated affirmation of liberal, American-style democracy and its correlate of religious and cultural pluralism. In their view, it is the case that "in a democratic and pluralistic society, legislation needs to be proposed and passed on the basis of a public ethic that can be affirmed by persons of various faiths and no faith. This public ethic can be an expression or translation of specific Christian faith, but that faith has to be expressed in terms that others can adopt as well, or it is an inappropriate establishment of religion" (p. 233). Evangelicals will do well to critically evaluate such claims by Stassen and Gushee, for in *Kingdom Ethics* it is not clear how Christians are to affirm and even advocate legislation in the context of a liberal society whose "basic conviction" dimension of ethics is in fundamental contradiction with their own, as is the case with those who find themselves on opposite sides of the abortion stalemate. Still up for grabs among evangelicals here is whether H. Richard Niebuhr's typological model of *Christ transforming culture* should be preferred to that of his *Christ against culture* type. Clearly, Stassen and Gushee argue on behalf of the former, though the flexibility of their method allows the latter still to be a live (and perhaps better) option for Christian ethics and practice.

Finally, let me register a note on Christology. In their preface, Stassen and Gushee state that they hope to develop a trinitarian ethic throughout the work, and they later describe their methodology as one of "incarnational discipleship." This expression refers to a number of things for the authors: the incarnate Jesus, as well as the embodiment of his ethical teachings in his own practices (p. 58). But there is a certain elasticity to the expression as well, as, for example, when the authors assert that "rules and principles are incarnated in narratives, and narratives are incarnated in specific rules and principles (and particular judgments)" (p. 117). It is not clear how these more elastic notions of incarnation as "embodiment" relate to the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity. Without an explicitly theological articulation of Christology to support it, "incarnational discipleship" as a descriptor for Christian ethics runs the risk of becoming a mere placeholder, not referring to Christ in any theologically concentrated sense, but used instead to describe an ethics of embodied narrative. One only wishes there were such a higher theological concentration of trinitarian and Christological language in Stassen and Gushee's achievement. Even in the light of the comprehensiveness, richness, and ultimate success of *Kingdom Ethics*, it remains the unfinished task of evangelical Christian ethics to ground itself theologically in the cosmic and universal significance of the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Matthew H. Loverin
University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, IN