

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance*. Vol. 1: *The Non-Biblical Texts from Qumran*. By Martin G. Abegg, with James E. Bowley and Edward M. Cook, in consultation with Emmanuel Tov. 2 parts. Leiden: Brill, 2003, xvii + 958 pp., \$299.00.

*The Dead Sea Scrolls Concordance (DSSC)* is marketed as a single volume in two parts. Each part is separately bound resulting in two large, handsome products, as one has come to expect from Brill. Part 1 contains a general introduction (pp. ix–xviii), a key to the sigla (p. xix), and the Hebrew concordance to Qumran non-biblical texts from Aleph to Mem (pp. 1–498). Part 2 contains the Hebrew concordance from Nun–Tav (pp. 499–771), the Aramaic concordance (pp. 773–946), and the Greek concordance (pp. 947–52). Part 2 also contains two appendices: Appendix I is a concordance of signs for numbers (pp. 953–56) and Appendix II records typographical and transcriptional errors in the text editions (pp. 957–58).

This is the first publication of a concordance of all non-biblical Qumran texts (Hebrew, Aramaic, Nabatean-Aramaic, and Greek) in one publication. Therefore it serves as an index for all the volumes of the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (DJD) series and other publications of Qumran texts. The concordance was independently produced, though it acknowledges careful comparison with all concordances published in individual DJD volumes and Kuhn's *Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960). It has effectively replaced Charlesworth's *Graphic Concordance to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), which only includes texts published before 1990 and is based on 223 Qumran texts and over 3,500 fragments with over 59,000 entries. The *DSSC* has by far surpassed that work, as it contains 3,771 Hebrew, 1,930 Aramaic, and 36 Greek words. There are a total of 111,141 entries in Hebrew, 21,628 in Aramaic, and 65 in Greek. In addition, there are 307 number signs for a total of 133,141 entries of extant words in the non-biblical Qumran corpus (p. xi).

In addition to DJD entries, the *DSSC* covers other important editions of texts, such as those of CD, 1QpHab, 1QapGen, 1QS, 1QM, 1QH<sup>a</sup>, and 11Q19. This volume focuses on non-biblical texts, though biblical quotations, lemmas in pesher texts, and 4QRe-worked Pentateuch (4Q158, 4Q364–4Q367) and 4Q522 22–25 are fully concorded. It also includes forty-one Cave IV texts which have not yet been published in DJD. Also covered are the psalms that are not present in the MT collection of 150 Psalms but included in what might otherwise be categorized as biblical manuscripts (4Q88 VII, 14–IX, 15; X, 4–15; 11Q5 XVIII, 1–XIX, 18; XXI, 11–XXII, 15; XXIV, 3–17; XXVI, 9–15; XXVII, 2–11<sup>a</sup>; XXVIII, 4–14; and 11Q6 4–5, 1–16<sup>a</sup>; 6, 1–2). Also included are the Aramaic targums (4Q156, 4Q157, and 11Q10). Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible (4Q119–4Q122; 7Q1) will be in a future volume, as will texts from other Judean Desert sites. The present volume does include the ostraca published in DJD XXXVII (KhQ1–KhQ3). The Greek concordance covers 7Q2–7Q5, 7Q15, 7Q19, 4Q126, and 4Q127, but not 7Q6–7Q14, 7Q16–7Q18, 4Q350, and 4Q361, which do not yield identifiable whole words. The Greek concordance represents the text as it appears in DJD; recognizable words are separated by spaces as opposed to the *scriptio continua* of the texts. Greek and Aramaic number signs are concorded separately in Appendix I. Typographical or transcriptional errors in the text editions are corrected without note in the concordance but are recorded in Appendix II.

Words are concorded according to language (with Nabatean-Aramaic manuscripts, 4Q235, and 4Q343 assimilated with Aramaic) in alphabetical order as opposed to root. Each lexeme is introduced by a header consisting of three components: key word (including any variant orthographical forms), part of speech, and gloss (with homograph number where applicable). For example, רַחֻּם is listed with English glosses provided in bold print for easy accessibility (lovingkindness, mercy, graciousness) and is followed by the part of speech (noun). It is then followed by the (pointed) word in Hebrew. After this heading comes the list of references with Qumran references in the left column and the unpointed, boldface Hebrew word with some Hebrew context in the right-hand column. There are no transliterations in these volumes. Glosses are loosely dependent on the lexicons of Koehler/Baumgartner, BDB, Jastrow, and Sokiloff.

This concordance is the first of a projected series of three. Future volumes will consist of concordances to the biblical texts from Qumran and to the texts from other sites in the Judean Desert. The *DSSC* is comparable only to recent electronic editions of the scrolls, such as Timothy Lim (in consultation with P. Alexander), *The Dead Sea Scrolls-Electronic Reference Library* 1 (3 discs; Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library 1; Oxford: Oxford University Press; Leiden: Brill, 1997) (about \$600, containing all of the scrolls from Qumran as well as photos of the material that was discovered at Masada, Wadi Murabbat, and Nahal Hever) and Emmanuel Tov, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Database (Non-Biblical Texts)* (The Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library, vol. 2; prepared by the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies [FARMS]; Leiden: Brill, 1999) (about \$250, containing only non-biblical material; see also <http://orion.mssc.huji.ac.il>).

With a price 20% more than that of the 1999 electronic version, it would be difficult to justify purchasing the *DSSC* rather than the electronic edition for private research. Yet for those of us who still prefer book versions to electronic, the *DSSC* is remarkably comprehensive and a vital resource for serious work in the Scrolls. Abegg and his team have put us in their debt for making the scrolls so much more accessible. With this volume, David L. Washburn's *A Catalog of Biblical Passages in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Atlanta: SBL, 2002), and the text of the *Dead Sea Scrolls Study Edition* (ed. Florentino Garcia Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar; 2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997, 1998), scholars have unprecedented access to these enormously important documents.

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*A Biblical History of Israel*. By Iain Provan, V. Phillips Long, and Tremper Longman III. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003, xiv + 426 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Any reader who dismisses *A Biblical History of Israel* (hereafter *BHI*) as another typical "cookie-cutter" rehash of OT history from conservatives has done the book a serious injustice. Instead, the authors raise the bar in the current debate by offering both design and product. They begin by developing an incisive rationale for a text-driven history of Israel. The historical survey that then follows implements the claims of their premise.

The first one-third of the volume presents a philosophical approach to historiography. While the authors critique the work of those who have pronounced biblical history "dead," their primary intent is to construct a positive schema taking the biblical text seriously as testimony. *BHI* explains how these "revisionist" (p. 78) historians arbitrarily favor the ambiguous witness of social sciences to Israelite history over Scripture's testimony. In this conflict of ideologies, the revisionists continue to apply a "scientific" approach based on positivism and a rejection of tradition.

Recent trends in the field discount the validity of this mechanistic, post-Enlightenment stance. The past is not static, Provan asserts, and is far too complex for such rigid reductionism. Instead, many historians have moved “away from the notion that history is a science and back toward the notion that history is an art” (p. 42). A more accurate epistemology, according to *BHI*, recognizes the legitimate role of testimony (“storytelling”). Provan also exposes Troeltsch’s “principle of analogy” as an inadequate standard for historiography. Present experience cannot suffice as the sole benchmark for past realities. A nomothetic approach to the past is likewise insufficient to account for the complex variables of a world subject to theistic and metaphysical intervention. However, testimony and tradition, rationally read and understood, can offer reliable information about the past. Therefore, *BHI* contends that Scripture’s testimony to history deserves the benefit of the doubt; the burden of proof lies with the revisionists to demonstrate its falsity.

The value of this testimony to a truthful view of the past, however, depends on a correct reading of narrative history in Scripture. Long offers a summary treatment of narrative poetics, stressing that history and narrative are complementary. He likens the biblical writers to portrait artists; they do not create history but simply depict it through their individual perspectives and skills. Thus historiography is *both* an art and a science: it communicates true data about the past but is “artfully presented” (p. 88).

In chapter 5, a key section linking this philosophy to the historical survey that follows, Provan candidly opens a window into the authors’ world view. Although they represent a theistic mindset, he affirms, the three are not writing “propaganda” imposed by their beliefs. “Our task is only to offer an interpretation of the biblical testimony about Israel’s past, set within the broader context of the past as it may be established from other sources of information, such that the reader will better understand both the testimony and the past” (p. 104).

A chronological survey of six periods of Israel’s history then comprises the remainder of the book. The authors’ treatment of each era includes sources for the period, a chronological overview, and the story as depicted in the biblical narrative. Significantly, the survey accomplishes the authors’ stated intent. First, they give the biblical materials pride of place as historical testimony. Second, these narratives receive careful attention *as literature*. Third, Provan, Long, and Longman make judicious use of extra-biblical sources related to each period. Their treatment is balanced, recognizing that these sources, too, demand interpretation.

Though *BHI* brings many worthy features to the table in the current discussion, I mention only three. Most obvious is its constructive philosophy regarding “epistemological openness” to tradition as a valid historiographic witness. The authors examine the presuppositions of revisionist historians evenhandedly, concluding that since all historiography reflects assumptions, the biblical materials merit equal consideration as truth-tellers about the past. Ideology in writing history does not preclude accuracy. *BHI* calls for twenty-first century historians to emerge from the “post-Enlightenment club” to take biblical testimony seriously.

A second value *BHI* offers is its focus on narrative as a legitimate vehicle to transmit historical data. The authors display a keen sensitivity to the literary character of OT narrative, recognizing the nuanced artistry of a historical reading of the text. They also contend that current research pays too little attention to the place of writing in the ancient Near East. “Literary understanding is a necessary condition of historical understanding, and both literary and historical understanding are necessary conditions of competent biblical interpretation,” Long asserts (p. 81).

Third, *BHI* is effective in achieving its purpose because of its engaging demeanor. While the authors are candid about their theistic worldview, they are not heavy-handed or *ad hominem* in their approach to opposing positions. Make no mistake, this work exposes what it sees as the “arbitrary” (pp. 14–17, 32), “inconsistent” (pp. 18, 27, 32),

presumptuous (pp. 61–62), “prejudicial” (p. 32), illogical (pp. 112–15), and *a priori* (p. 54) propositions of revisionists. Yet it does so seeking response from this “wider audience” as well as from those readers who “share the authors’ presuppositions” (p. 103). The extensive range of documentation in the notes should also serve this end.

Problems with *BHI* are relatively few and minor, and are anticipated and characterized by the authors as “particular irritations” (p. 104). One category of such irritants involves editorial issues: convoluted sentence structure (pp. 44, 261); quotes needing more specific context (pp. 45, 47, 143); a word omitted (p. 102); and the like. The apparent discrepancy regarding economic facts as a first-tier (p. 77) or second-tier (p. 143) concern of the *Annales* school needs resolution. Some discussions of chronological matters seem unaware of similar contexts elsewhere; harmonizing these sections could streamline the volume (pp. 113, 131, 140, 162). A three-author work is seldom without stylistic “seams,” as Provan notes (p. 104), but on the whole *BHI* blends the three voices well.

A second set of concerns I simply label “further questions.” Do not the details of tradition in the Pentateuchal narratives (p. 58) call into serious question the possibility of a “later time period” than Moses for their origins (p. 112)? In light of *BHI*’s intent to “suppress” many theological conclusions (p. 103), is too much made of theology in its treatment of Joseph and the exodus sections (pp. 127, 130)? Are there not problems in linking the nineteenth dynasty (13th century BC) in Egyptian chronology with the biblical exodus (p. 132)? Why does “Ruth” belong to the list of name changes on p. 289? Does not their own testimony call into question the proposal that “some of the prophecies and wisdom books may be the products of a later period” than the *biblical* history of Israel depicts (p. 303)? I wonder, too, whether later editions will include maps to supplement the helpful charts in this first edition. An overall conclusion and a more extensive preface might also enhance the book.

Despite these issues, *BHI*, like K. A. Kitchen’s recent work, takes the historical value of the biblical text more seriously than do volumes by William Dever and James Barr that also critique revisionism. The authors confirm the claim of Polybius: “If you take the truth out of history, what is left is merely an unprofitable tale.”

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*On the Reliability of the Old Testament.* By K. A. Kitchen. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, xxii + 662 pp., \$45.00.

By trade and training an Egyptologist, by avocation an OT scholar, and by instinct and interest an apologist, K. A. Kitchen marshals his wide-ranging knowledge and the fruit of decades of intensive research to produce this *magnum opus*, one that clearly reflects all three facets of his scholarly career. Its title is suggestive of his convictions and characteristically refreshing candor regarding the OT and the need to provide defensible arguments as to its nature and character. Those of us who have benefited from Kitchen’s contributions to OT scholarship—beginning in a significant way with his *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Tyndale, 1966)—welcome the present work as a culmination of a lifetime of rigorous and unflinching dedication to the task of setting the OT on a solid bedrock of credibility as a historical text. Kitchen’s effort is grounded not in dogmatic or theological givens, but rather is the product of painstaking attention to history, archaeology, critical methodologies, and every other test by which ancient literature should be subjected. The result, to the fair-minded reader, is a well nigh irrefutable case for the reliability of the OT.

Not everyone will enjoy or benefit from this book. Those of a so-called “minimalist” persuasion who have raised the level of skepticism about the OT’s historical credibility to a virtually dogmatic or credal level will, of course, reject Kitchen out of hand as a misguided fundamentalist whose arguments, at best, are selectively derived and driven solely by apologetic interests. Others will be turned off and offended by Kitchen’s celebrated wit that admittedly tends to the acerbic and dangerously close to the *ad hominem* in places. But this is Kitchen, and whether or not one finds his style and personality offensive has no bearing on the quality of his scholarship or the force of his arguments. Indeed, those most likely to feel victimized by his barbs have themselves written with venomous pens on occasion, especially in assessing the works of scholars whom they delight in assigning to the ranks of unenlightened biblicists. It is, no doubt, for some of these that Kitchen reserves his choicest morsels. Finally, Kitchen, as a representative of much of British evangelicalism, will disappoint some American conservatives by his equivocations on matters such as the life spans of the antediluvians (pp. 446–47) or his evasions (even silence) when it comes to the nature of the exodus plagues (explainable as heightened natural events coordinated with the agricultural calendar, pp. 249–50) and the crossing of the Red Sea itself (unmentioned as to how; see pp. 254–65).

Caveats such as these fail to diminish in the least the overall impact of the book as a powerful expression of a well-informed defense of the historicity and even miraculous character of the OT. In fact, Kitchen’s refusal to “play the miracle card” may well be an intentional strategy designed to show the Hebrew Bible can stand on its own feet in terms of the normal criteria for determining the reliability of ancient historical accounts. That is, the OT record does not need the supernatural to give it credibility as historiography, though admittedly its nature as Scripture can alone account for the way in which the record lies before us in terms of both its contents and its methodology.

More serious are the number of instances where Kitchen either accords archaeological evidence primacy over the text or begs the question in order to accommodate some point of view or other. A few examples must suffice. In his discussion of Saul’s tenure as king, Kitchen settles for a 32-year reign, ignoring the evidence that suggests otherwise (including Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, pp. 192–94, and Paul’s Pisidian address [Acts 13:21]). In considering the 300 years of Israel’s occupation of the Transjordan in Jephthah’s time, Kitchen finds it necessary to reduce the dates of various judges and, in fact, the 300 years itself in order to account for his late exodus date of 1260/1250 BC. Thus, he resorts to such measures as describing the forty years of peace in Gideon’s time as “a round figure closer to thirty years” (p. 209). If it were closer to thirty, one would expect it to be rounded off to thirty. As for Jephthah’s statement about the 300 years (which would date the exodus at 1446 BC or so), Kitchen dismisses the judge as “a roughneck, an outcast, and not exactly the kind of man who would scruple first to take a Ph.D. in local chronology at some ancient university of the Yarmuk before making strident claims to the Ammonite ruler” (p. 209). The kindest thing that can be said of such an assessment is that such disregard of ancient sources is not worthy of a scholar who elsewhere chides others for playing fast and loose with whatever objective evidence is available.

In the same vein, Kitchen, known for espousing the late exodus date on archaeological grounds, skirts the implications of the 480-year figure of 1 Kgs 6:1 by proposing two possible scenarios: (1) The number 480 is a multiple of 12 and 40, with forty representing a “full generation” as opposed to 22/25 years for an actual generation (p. 307). This compresses the 480 to 288/300 years, exactly what is needed to accommodate a mid-thirteenth century BC exodus; (2) the “480 years are in fact a selection from the 554 + xyz years aggregate, *on some principle not stated*” (p. 308, my emphasis). Were Kitchen’s proofs of OT reliability as unreliable as this resort, he clearly would lose a great deal of credibility as a historian.

One more example must suffice, this time one of historical inaccuracy. Referring to the Shiloh tabernacle as “the old [Mosaic] tabernacle’s successor shrine” (for which there is no historical evidence), Kitchen goes on to cite Jer 7:12–15 and Ps 78:60 as proofs of its destruction when in fact neither text says more than that Shiloh itself was destroyed. Later, Solomon worshiped at the great high place at Gibeon and specifically at “the tent of meeting of God, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness” (2 Chr 1:3). Clearly the Mosaic structure had been taken from Shiloh before the site was destroyed and had been relocated eventually at Gibeon.

These few observations notwithstanding, the world of OT scholarship has become deeply in debt to K. A. Kitchen for this monumental oeuvre, the capstone of a lifetime of consecrated learning. Those who most need to read and profit from it may not do so, but for the rest of us, already confident in the reliability of the OT as a historical record, this prodigious work will long remain a treasury of information about the Hebrew Scriptures and a model of how to defend it as a trustworthy account of God’s gracious dealings with his chosen people in OT times.

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*Beyond The Bible: Moving from Scripture to Theology.* By I. Howard Marshall. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004, 136 pp., \$13.99 paper.

*Beyond the Bible*, the most recent outcome of the Hayward Lectureship at Acadia Divinity College, is designed, like the lectureship in general, as a succinct study assessing biblical and theological issues and presenting the most recent findings to non-specialists in a way that is accessible and rewarding (p. 2). The intention of these lectures was to propose a biblically legitimate way to move from the Bible to doctrine, to “go beyond the Bible to get to theology biblically” (p. 95). The lectures were given by Dr. Marshall, but the book includes not only his three lectures, but also responses by Kevin Vanhoozer and Stanley Porter that further support the idea that hermeneutics should be a conversation, not a monologue.

Chapter 1 is merely preliminary information on the issues surrounding evangelical hermeneutics. Few will take serious issue with anything presented. The great strength of this chapter is the brevity and clarity with which Marshall brings to light the problems of Packer’s article “Understanding the Bible: Evangelical Hermeneutics.” Specifically, he mentions that while authorial intention is important, it unfortunately ignores the question of *sensus plenior* and that while evangelicals hold to the truth of the Bible, this does not answer the question of what precisely truth means.

In chapter 2, Marshall looks at both conservative and progressive hermeneutical approaches to ethics, worship, and doctrine. He continues that while most would agree there is a need to modify worship and ethics for a new cultural and temporal context, it is not as acceptable to argue for modifications in doctrine. But while this may be the general consensus, Marshall shows that doctrine does indeed progress within the pages of the Bible and that with this in mind, we are to look for scriptural principles to guide our own continued doctrinal development.

Although adumbrated earlier, it is not until chapter 3 that we see the true beginnings of criteria for going beyond the Bible. His first principle is that the NT authors were Christ-centered and interpreted the OT in light of this. Second, Jesus’ own teaching was underdeveloped due to his own epochal and cultural context. And lastly, our interpre-

tations, like those of the apostles, are to be based on a combination of the word and insights received from the Holy Spirit.

Vanhoozer accepts the basic principle of Marshall's plan but questions some of Marshall's specific applications. Especially troubling to him is Marshall's attempt to relativize Jesus' doctrine of God. Vanhoozer disagrees with Marshall's suggestion that it is inappropriate for us to view God as one who destroys entire nations. Vanhoozer then summarizes three earlier views of Calvin, Webb, and Wolterstorff for going beyond the Bible and closes with a canonical approach that takes seriously all three.

Porter's article is not really a response to Marshall as it is an organization of recent hermeneutical approaches such as the historical-critical method, speech act theory, and the approach of Wittgenstein. He does briefly interact with Marshall and concludes with his own perspective on the matter. His contribution is that Paul (the premier interpreter) held certain presuppositions about Jesus, God, and Christianity in general. Further, he argues that translation theory is a good model for arriving at theological meaning. What he means by this is that one must first determine the kernel or heart of what is being said in the original text, then put the kernel into the equivalent form of expression in today's theological language so that it has the same effect on the present receiver as it did on the first hearer.

The strengths of this book are its brevity, its structure, and its rallying call. It introduces and wrestles with the tough questions without taking up too much of the reader's time. Structurally, it has allowed two responses from evangelical experts in the area that force the reader both to entertain new ideas based on the original lectures and to go beyond them. And it did indeed inspire me anew to break down the theological/biblical wall. At the same time, I did not feel the questions asked or the suggestions made by Marshall were as revolutionary as Vanhoozer seemed to assert. The question of how to move from the Bible to doctrine is indeed important, but do not expect this book to solve the problems. Instead of an orderly technique for arriving at solutions, Marshall is really only able to suggest boundaries within which our hermeneutical work should be done. But we should expect no more; the fluidity of the topic as well as the concise nature of the book make final answers impossible. None of the contributors was able to do more than make beginning suggestions towards the future and call me into dialogue. Still, awareness and stimulation are in themselves important contributions, and this book should be commended.

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*Arabs in the Shadow of Israel: The Unfolding of God's Prophetic Plan for Ishmael's Line.*  
By Tony Maalouf. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003, 368 pp., \$14.99 paper.

The conversation between Islam and Christianity has heated greatly in the past few years because of the terrorist tactics of militant Islamic groups and the response by the West. An innocent victim in this battle is the Arab culture. Although many have employed the terms "Arab" and "Muslim" synonymously, the truth is that many Arabs are not Muslims and the vast majority of Muslims are not Arabs. This unfortunate identification of the two cultures has confused the relationship between westerners and the non-Muslim Arabs of the Middle East. Tony Maalouf has tried in his book *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel* to contribute to the conversation between Arabs and Christians by noting the prophetic promises made to Ishmael, how those promises unfolded throughout biblical history, and the eschatological implications of those promises.

After an historical introduction that briefly surveys the history of the Arab people, Maalouf presents his case concerning God's promises to Ishmael's descendants. His presentation is organized in four categories drawn from different periods of Israelite and Christian history, which serve as a framework to show the relationship of the Arab people to the history of God's chosen people Israel. Part 1, "Biblical Foundations," explores the history of Ishmael through the stories of Hagar and Ishmael in Genesis 16, 17, and 21. He includes a chapter on Paul's interpretation of those stories in Galatians 4. Part 2, "Arabs in the Light of Israel," explains the contribution of Arabs and their theology to the biblical witness during the time of the united monarchy, chiefly through the wisdom literature of Job and Proverbs. Part 3, "Arabs in the Darkness of Israel," describes the history of the Arabs in the post-exilic period. Finally, part 4, "Arabs in the Light of Christ," links the Arabs to the Jewish messianic expectations, and makes a particular connection between the Arabs and the Magi worshipers of the child Jesus.

Maalouf makes several important contributions in his book. To begin with, this book will benefit anyone doing exegetical work on the Ishmael passages of the OT. He comments on Arabic sources perhaps otherwise unknown to the reader; see particularly the endnotes for the Introduction (pp. 225–31). Also, his discussion of the work of God outside of Israel is a controversial and important subject. The most significant theological contribution of the book, however, is the placement of the Arabs in God's eschatological plan (pp. 219–24). Maalouf contends the promises to Ishmael's descendants made to Hagar have placed Arabs in a special place in the economy of God's salvation. They occupy, in a sense, a middle ground between God's elect, Israel, and the surrounding nations (pp. 184–86, 220–22). Therefore, Israel's mission to be a light to the nations must first of all include the surrounding Arabs.

There are several important problems, both in terms of content and style. Stylistically, the book suffers from not having a focused audience. It is unclear for whom the book is written, so that rather technical linguistic arguments (e.g. pp. 138–40) are combined with elements more at home in a popular work (e.g. the speculation that the Samaritan woman of John 4 or the Samaritan leper of Luke 17 were Ishmaelites [p. 111]). Regarding content, a significant point in the book is the identification of Ishmaelites and Arabs. Maalouf has claimed that the promises made to Hagar concerning the descendants of Ishmael are fulfilled in the Arabs (pp. 219–24).

But are Ishmaelites and Arabs the same? The title and subtitle of the book as well as numerous statements made throughout the book would imply that a simple one-to-one correspondence can be made between the two. This conclusion, of course, would be far from Maalouf's own thoughts, as his own description of the case makes clear. For example, concerning the relationship of Ishmaelites and north-Arabian Arabs at the time of Christ, he concludes, "Whether or not there is a strong ethnic basis for this classification, no one can deny that Ishmael had become a great symbol for north Arabian tribes by the first century AD . . . *As to where the Arabs originated from, the subject is still obscure*" (p. 45, italics added). In fact, his whole discussion of the origins of the Arab people is marked with suggestions but little conclusive evidence. This uncertainty concerning the relationship between Ishmaelites and Arabs becomes problematic later in the book, however, because after the term "Ishmael/ite" falls out of current usage (about mid-tenth century BC [p. 113]), Maalouf seems ready to relate any Arab event or person to the fulfillment of God's promises to Ishmael, despite the historical fact that the term "Arab" represents a far wider scope than the more limited "Ishmaelite."

Despite these problems, *Arabs in the Shadow of Israel* should be read by anyone interested in Arab-Christian-Jewish relations, anyone interested in the history of Arabs during the biblical period, and anyone interested in the mission of God in the OT. Undoubtedly some will disagree with the author, but the book remains an important resource for OT studies, and particularly for the current writing on the mission of God

in the OT. It should take a place in the discussion along with works such as Walter Kaiser's *Mission in the Old Testament*, Arthur Glasser's *Announcing the Kingdom*, and John Piper's *Let the Nations Be Glad*.

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*Contested Holiness: Jewish, Muslim and Christian Perspectives on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.* By Rivka Gonen. Jersey City: KTAV, 2003, 206 pp., \$19.95 paper.

The struggle over the sovereignty of and right of access to Jerusalem's Temple Mount reflects in microcosm the larger conflicts of the Middle East (Israel vs. the Palestinians; Jews vs. Arabs; East vs. West). Since it was constructed by Herod the Great over two millennia ago, the Temple Mount, a walled expanse of gray-to-golden limestone dominating the landscape of Jerusalem's Old City, has enclosed temples, churches, mosques, and shrines—Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and pagan. Each of its overlords has sought to meld religion and politics into a single identity worthy of the God (or gods) who declared the ground that it encloses to be holy. The related issues are entangled and immense, and continue to hold tremendous emotive weight for a great many people. It is helpful, then, that Rivka Gonen offers to us *Contested Holiness*, a well-illustrated look at the ways Jewish, Christian, and Muslim claims on the Temple Mount have been expressed through the ages.

Gonen is as qualified as anyone to tackle this subject, having excavated in Jerusalem with both Benjamin Mazar and Yigal Shiloh and now having completed her tenure as senior curator of the Department of Jewish Ethnography at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Gonen is fair in her presentation, giving adequate attention to both Jewish and Muslim ties to the Temple Mount, while making the case that Christians, for the most part, transferred their need for holy ground to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (pp. 80–81, 123). At the same time, it is not difficult to detect evidence of Gonen's own identity (an Israeli Jew), and her overall tone tends to favor the Jewish presence both in Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount. For instance, Gonen emphasizes the strong, unbroken longing of the Jewish people to return to the holiness of the place (pp. 77–78, 84, 86, 105), while noting that a comparable Christian or Muslim longing throughout the centuries has been sporadic and sometimes contrived for theological, political, or even economic reasons. In any case, she argues, such longing is based on the earlier priority of Jewish claims to the site (pp. 80–88, 95, 99–103, 106–7, 139–40 and especially pp. 114–15 and 123–26).

In spite of the complexity of the conflict the Temple Mount represents, there is nothing terribly complex about this volume itself, and Gonen's writing is direct and to the point. She provides a fairly comprehensive overview of the relevant archaeological and historical data, and mentions as well a number of traditions and legends of all sorts related to the Temple Mount (a sampling, really, of what is essential). Gonen does this in a way that resonates with the non-specialist, yet does not compromise accuracy. In short, her style of presentation is consistent with what may be found in *BAR* (to name a well-known publication), with ample anecdotes and many black-and-white illustrations. Gonen offers little or no critical examination of her sources, preferring to let the data and stories speak for themselves (with a few leading comments, as mentioned above). She does, however, include numerous footnotes of citation and a nice bibliography.

To set the stage, chapter 1 relates recent attempts of the Temple Mount Faithful, a small but growing group of national-religious Jews, to lay the foundation stone of the

third temple on the Temple Mount, and the various responses, both positive and negative, that their actions have elicited among Jews, Christians, and Muslims worldwide. Chapter 2 contains a short history of the Temple Mount and a physical description of it as it exists today, including various structures standing on its surface and those lying below, such as underground halls, passages, and water cisterns.

Chapter 3, entitled "Locating Holiness," contains a short essay on how and why a particular place is held to become holy, followed by a summary of various suggestions as to where the Jewish temples (Solomon's and Herod's) may have stood. Chapter 4, really an expansion of the second chapter, focuses on the history of the Temple Mount, tracing the ebb and flow of its various shrines and those who built and destroyed them, from the time of King David to the present.

Chapter 5, perhaps the most interesting, offers a sampling of the many legends, beliefs, and aspirations that have been affixed to the Temple Mount over the centuries by Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike, each fostering the idea of the "universal centrality" of the spot. Gonen notes that the faithful among Judaism and Islam to this day believe in the exclusivity of their own ties and legends to the site, a phenomenon that lies at the core of the current conflict.

The final two chapters offer a helpful summary of the last century of conflict between Jews and Arabs over the Temple Mount. Gonen ends with several proposals for solving the conflict, either by sharing (e.g. through internationalization) or dividing the site. Given the unending volatility of the Middle East, none appears likely to be implemented.

The value of Gonen's book lies both in its timeliness and in the summary collection of data of various types that it contains. Anyone interested in the city of Jerusalem (past or present) or the Middle East conflict today should be interested in her work.

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*The Apocalyptic Literature.* By Stephen L. Cook. Interpreting Biblical Texts. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003, 233 pp., \$19.00 paper.

Apocalyptic literature's popularity is attested by the mega-million sales of the fictional *Left Behind* series. Publishing houses of various theological stripes have stepped forward with helps in that area. Stephen Cook, Associate Professor of OT at Virginia Theological Seminary, provides an introductory text. Designed as an overview and orientation to the subject, the book divides into two unequal parts: "Issues in Interpreting Apocalyptic Texts" (chaps. 1–4, pp. 19–87); and "Reading the Apocalyptic Texts of the Bible" (chaps. 5–9, pp. 91–217).

The author first sifts for meaning and significance of apocalyptic writings in the Dead Sea scrolls (pp. 23–26, 28, 29). Most readers, however, will probably question the value of several pages being devoted to the Native American Ghost Dance Movement (pp. 35, 36, 42–44, 86). Others will find his criticisms of N. T. Wright's views (pp. 40–41), the American "rapture" emphasis (pp. 21, 48, 64–66, 75, 179–80, 202), and the theological leftists Tina Pippin and Catherine Keller (pp. 56–60) interesting.

Cook argues for sane literalism and criticizes senseless literalistic interpretations of biblical apocalyptic (pp. 58, 63, 72). However, while he shows care in handling the exact wording of the biblical texts without being literalistic, his view of the Bible's divine inspiration does not reflect classical orthodoxy (pp. 33, 35).

Persons keen on apocalyptic in the OT are covered in preliminary treatments of Ezekiel (pp. 94–98), Zechariah (pp. 99–104), Joel (pp. 105–10), Isaiah (pp. 111–18), Daniel (pp. 124–47), and Malachi (pp. 119–23). Of all biblical material, Pauline apocalyptic is dealt with most briefly (pp. 168–82). Cook concludes his book with an overview of the book of Revelation (pp. 192–217).

Thankfully and refreshingly, Cook gives strong endorsement to repeated fulfillments of the biblical apocalyptic (pp. 69–70). Though Cook takes exception to N. T. Wright, he applauds the need to see apocalyptic as addressing global, corporate, and Church salvation vs. individual salvation. He relates the biblical apocalyptic to recent versions of future life appearing in the film *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* (pp. 74, 194). Cook seems most favorable to the highly respected interpreters Jacques Ellul, Eugene Peterson, and William Lane.

The role of Jesus and “the Jesus group” (i.e. the Gospels) on apocalyptic (pp. 148–67) should draw our interest. Why Cook avoids use of the standard terms of the controversy about how the destruction of Jerusalem plays out in the apocalyptic predictions is puzzling. Although he does not use the now familiar categories (full and partial preterism), the reader is not left wondering where his opinion lies. He does side substantially against full preterism and in favor of partial preterism (pp. 187–88).

William Lane, commenting on the “little apocalypse” of Mark 13 (p. 187), clearly favored partial preterism. Cook himself comes clean in dealing with the parallel passage in Matthew 24, which is another confirmation that full or hyper-preterism is not supported by careful exegesis. In the words of Cook, “The events of AD 70 do not amount to the end-time of crisis, but *prefigure* it. The events surrounding Titus’s destruction of Jerusalem were only a preliminary apocalyptic upsurge, separate from doomsday and the Parousia. Whereas Mark 13 blurs and foreshortens the distinction between the two apocalyptic crises, Matthew 24 decompresses them and sharpens the contrast” (p. 188). Therefore, Cook’s view, not shared by the *Left Behind* eschatologists, is that there is more in favor of multiple fulfillments or layered completions of biblical apocalyptic than in single, futuristic, literalistic fulfillments.

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*From Every People and Nation: A Biblical Theology of Race.* By J. Daniel Hays. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003, 240 pp., \$19.00.

From a practical standpoint, J. Daniel Hays, currently Chair of the Department of Biblical Studies and Theology at Ouachita Baptist University, is well qualified to write a book on race, as he and his family spent more than five years as Caucasian missionaries to the Black nationals of Ethiopia. Indeed, within the pages of *From Every People and Nation* the reader will not find a sterile theoretical discussion of issues related to multiethnicity, but rather a practical, thorough, and thought-provoking treatment of race from the pen of one who has had to grapple with the challenge of racism on a very real and personal level.

In short, to use his own words, in this volume Hays has attempted to “fill the need for a serious exegetically based study of passages that relate to the race issue” (p. 21). In some respects, then, *From Every People and Nation* is similar to other recent Christian treatments of race such as Charles Ware’s *Prejudice and the People of God* (Kregel, 2001) and Cain Felder’s *Race, Racism, and the Biblical Narrative* (Augsburg/Fortress,

2002). However, Hays's work is unique in that it provides a thoroughly exegetical treatment of the multi-ethnic components of God's revelation. In fact, seven of the ten chapters that comprise this text are solely exegetical in nature. In these chapters Hays methodically and comprehensively exposit the canonical passages relevant to his study as he challenges the modern Church to pursue racial unity on all levels. Indeed, those familiar with the literature in this field likely will agree that *From Every People and Nation* is the most exegetical and practical treatment of race and related issues since T. B. Maston's *The Bible and Race* (Broadman, 1959).

Like the other volumes in the New Studies in Biblical Theology series, *From Every People and Nation* has many strengths. For example, in addition to being a generally well-written text, this book has many helpful peripheral features such as its multiple indices and the largest Christian bibliography on race and racial issues of which I am aware—twenty-four pages and over 400 titles, many with which Hays interacts throughout his work. Moreover, several of the exegetical sections of this volume are simply outstanding. For instance, as D. A. Carson notes in the preface to this volume, Hays's treatment of the so-called "Curse of Ham" passage (Gen 9:18–27) is both penetrating and convincing. In this section, Hays clearly demonstrates that the curse recorded has nothing to do with race *per se*, but rather is a prophecy regarding the Israelite conquest of the Canaanites upon entering the Promised Land. Additionally, throughout this text Hays is adept at showing how certain themes (e.g. the salvation of the Gentiles, the unity of the people of God, or the notion that sin scatters the peoples of the world but God's blessings unite them) are present throughout the Bible, and that it is impossible to understand the full meaning of certain biblical texts apart from an awareness of such themes.

In spite of the above accolades, there are several weaknesses to *From Every People and Nation* of which the prospective reader should be aware. The most glaring drawback to this text is Hays's generalizations regarding White Western Christians. For example, Hays repeatedly writes of a general "perception among many White Christians that the biblical story is a story about White people" (p. 86; cf. pp. 34, 199, 202). While it is certainly true that some misinformed White Christians do have this perception, after more than ten years of professional service in both the Church and the academy, I disagree with Hays that this is a common problem. Certainly Hays's citations of White actors depicting biblical characters in Hollywood movies and DaVinci's painting of the Last Supper are not convincing proof of widespread prejudice in the Western Church. Additionally, several times Hays writes of the "presuppositions of racial bias that still reside [among many scholars] in the field of biblical and theological studies" (p. 118; cf. pp. 19, 36, 92). As proof of this bias, Hays cites the vocabulary employed by certain Bible translators as well as the failure of some Christian scholars to address the race question in their works—a question that Hays refers to as "the most important issue for the Church today" (p. 17). Yet, such proof is hardly convincing evidence of widespread racial bias in the Christian academic community. In short, then, although he does not develop the above thoughts in-depth, Hays seems to believe that many (if not most) White Christians are racially prejudiced. I believe this claim is a largely untrue generalization.

A second shortcoming of *From Every People and Nation* is Hays's overemphasis on interracial marriages. While interracial marriage is certainly a topic the modern Church must address, I found Hays's statements regarding this topic excessive and too frequent in occurrence. For example, Hays claims that "interracial marriage is strongly affirmed by Scripture" (emphasis original, p. 80), and "White Christians who . . . oppose interracial marriages . . . are still prejudiced, and I would suggest that they are out of line with God's revealed will" (p. 81, cf. pp. 149, 158, 178–79, 203–4). While the essence of Hays's remarks is correct, I believe he has overstated his case, assuming that prejudice

is the *only* reason why someone would oppose an interracial marriage. There are many legitimate reasons to oppose a particular marriage (let alone an interracial marriage), yet Hays repeatedly asserts that opposition to interracial marriage is a sure-fire indication of racism.

In conclusion, the above criticisms notwithstanding, *From Every People and Nation* is a fine volume that ought to find its way on to the bookshelf of many theologians, pastors, and interested laypeople. Indeed, this text is probably the best book on race currently in print, and it will do much to further the discussion of this important topic in the contemporary Church.

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*Genesis*. By David Cotter. Berit Olam: Studies in Hebrew Narrative and Poetry. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003, xxxviii + 366 pp., \$49.95.

Readers of the *Journal* are probably already familiar with David Cotter's respected dissertation published in the SBL dissertation series entitled *A Study of Job 4-5 in the Light of Contemporary Literary Theory* (1992). In his recent work on Genesis, Cotter expands his expertise to include narrative as well as poetry. The intent of this commentary is to focus on the literary art of the book of Genesis.

Cotter begins with a 26-page introduction in which he accomplishes two things. First he describes his own hermeneutical background by answering three questions: (1) Who am I? (2) Where am I standing? and (3) What am I seeing? He summarizes as follows: "I stand in the midst of the Catholic Church and its ancient and modern traditions of biblical commentary. I am ordained for ministry in this Church, and thus have a preacher's sensibilities. I am a monk in this Church, and hence turn to Scripture as the foundation of my daily life. But I am not divorced from the time in which I live and so must take seriously the skepticism with which contemporary literary theory regards fixed meanings in texts. Although I read the historical critics, I would describe myself . . . as a reader . . . of the final form of the text . . . My interest is more in the canonical text and the details of literary craft encountered there than in the history of the text's development" (p. xxiii).

Second, Cotter offers in his introduction a brief survey of narrative techniques, i.e. plot, structure, character and characterization, and point of view. His treatment is clear and free of unexplained technical terminology. However, the reader looking for a scholarly discussion of issues such as authorship, date, ANE background, literary sources, and the like, will be disappointed.

Cotter divides Genesis into two sections: Part 1—Stories about Beginnings: Genesis 1–11; and Part 2—Stories about the Troubled Family Chosen for Blessing: Genesis 12–50. In part 1, he structures his comments according to the following outline: Genesis 1:1–2:3 (The Story of Creation and All That Is); Genesis 2–4 (The Story of the Creation of Man and Woman, the Paradise in Which They Lived and That They Chose to Lose, and the Sin That Ensued); Genesis 6–9 (The Story of the Great Flood and the Covenant That Ensued); and Genesis 11:1–9 (The Story about Babel). He also includes three "Notes" on "The Ongoing Genealogy of Humanity" (Gen 5, 10, and 11:10–32). He concludes this portion of his commentary with a summary, "The Narrative Structure of Genesis 1–11."

Throughout his commentary, Cotter avoids discussions of literary sources and treats the narrative(s) as a single story or unit. A few comments will have to suffice.

He understands the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as referring to “universal knowledge” (p. 31). There is a disappointing lack of comment on Enoch in his discussion of chapter 5. Does Enoch not stand out from all who “die”? Is there no allusion to the “walking with God” of chapter 3? He understands 6:1–4 to refer to an improper “mixing” of spiritual and physical beings—an undoing of what God has “separated” in Genesis 1 (p. 53). Although he acknowledges that many exegetes find two flood stories combined together, Cotter treats the whole narrative unit as a whole (pp. 49–63). His discussion of the Table of Nations is limited to two paragraphs (p. 65).

In part 2, Cotter, after an introduction, divides the patriarchal narratives into the following units: Genesis 12–25 (In the Time of the First Generation); Genesis 25–28 (In the Time of the Second Generation); Genesis 28–36 (In the Time of the Third Generation); and Genesis 37–50 (In the Time of the Fourth Generation). He also includes two excursuses on “God as a Developing Character in Genesis 12–25” (pp. 171–79) and “Outsiders: The Use of Location, Movement, Concentric Structure to Highlight the Autonomy of Female Characters” (pp. 329–37) as well as a note on Gen 36:1–43—“Esau and His Strengths” (pp. 261–62). He offers no historical background to Genesis 14 (p. 45). He presents a very good discussion of Hagar and her importance as a rejected and disenfranchised character whom God cares for, as well as an interesting character study of Abraham and Lot.

In terms of evaluation, several comments are in order. Cotter writes with a warm, engaging style, pastoral in its flavor, disarming in its simplicity; the reader feels as if he is having a “hermeneutical conversation” with a seasoned exegetical heart and mind. (In the introduction, he calls himself a “conversation partner” [p. xxiii].) Cotter is very sensitive to literary techniques, and offers a thoroughly literary commentary on the final form of the book. Although his work is unencumbered by the minutiae of scholarship, Cotter is conversant with contemporary literary theory and literary approaches to Genesis (even evangelical contributions; note his extensive interaction with David Dorsey’s work on literary structure). Finally, at times Cotter offers extended reflections on and quotations from the history of interpretation. This adds texture and further hermeneutical considerations to his own commentary.

A few words of criticism also seem appropriate. Cotter has clearly drunk deeply from the well of hermeneutical relativism. For example, in his discussion of “God as a Developing Character in Genesis 12–25,” he writes, “I think that, with perhaps some rare exceptions, claims of absolute rightness and certain wrongness about matters of biblical interpretation are misguided” (p. 172). Statements like this pepper his commentary, but Cotter is usually better than his word, and despite his own rhetoric of relativity, he usually offers evidence for his conclusions. Perhaps a more telling symptom of his relativism is his treatment of the sin of Sodom. Because subsequent biblical commentary (Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah) mentions aspects of the sin of Sodom other than sexual, Cotter wonders whether homosexuality is the issue, asserting, “The sin of Sodom is not easily, if at all, to be identified with homosexuality” (p. 120, n. 52). He does not deal at all with the massive history of interpretation that finds that aberrant sexuality was in fact the main, but not the only, issue. Also, Cotter’s comments are often void of theological discussion. In places where he could have put his literary expertise to good use and made theological observations, he refrains and limits his discussion to literary issues.

These negatives aside, Cotter is a pleasant conversation partner in the interpretation of Genesis and offers a wealth of literary insight.

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*Punishment and Forgiveness in Israel's Migratory Campaign.* By Won W. Lee. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, xv + 308 pp., \$45.00 paper.

Won W. Lee expresses serious concern about what he understands to be subjective investigation (form criticism, source criticism, historical criticism) into the structure of the Pentateuch generally and the book of Numbers specifically. Lee explains in detail how many leading Pentateuchal scholars conclude their investigations by forcing their own external matrix upon the objects of their study, though they may have striven for objectivity. Subjectivity becomes apparent through results that disagree. Lee seeks to be more empirical and, thereby, more objective; he desires "to interpret the biblical text on its own terms" (p. viii). His attempt at a more empirical approach (based upon conceptual analysis) is expressed in his detailed investigation of Num 10:11–36:13.

Lee's work contains three chapters, a conclusion, an appendix, a selected bibliography, and an index of both authors and terms. In chapter 1, he rehearses the work of six major scholars of the book of Numbers, considering both their methodological contributions and their shortcomings. Lee introduces his idea for a more empirical methodology in chapter 2. He describes this methodology as conceptual analysis. Chapter 3 contains a complex investigation into Num 10:11–36:13 using conceptual analysis to determine textual limits, structure, and meaning. This academic work closes with a well-written conclusion. An appendix offers a synopsis of Num 10:11–36:31, providing structural outlines of the section from eight prominent commentators.

Lee's admirable goal is expressed in his preface: he desires to "articulate the interrelationships among the many units of Numbers 10:11–36:13 with an empirically verifiable procedure" (p. vii). The discernible problem with this section in Numbers is "no readily apparent order of the arrangement of these diverse materials" (pp. xiv–xv). Admitting that these units of material may be little more than collections "reflecting the traditions of the Israelites' wilderness experience rather than . . . a literary entity" (p. xv), Lee goes on to argue that "the simple characterization of this part of the book of Numbers, and of the whole, as having no unity is exegetically unwarranted" (p. xv). Lee insists he can demonstrate a text with unity and "an identifiable concept responsible for . . . location and arrangement" (p. xv) of the units from the text itself.

Chapter 1 opens with preliminary remarks offering a survey of recent commentaries on Numbers and considering the variety of text divisions within the book. Lee then critically reviews major proposals by selected leading scholars (Gray, Noth, Budd, Olson, Milgrom, and Ashley), identifying and appraising each proposal's shortcomings. He concludes the chapter with an excellent summation that focuses on three issues: the starting point for any structural investigation is the book of Numbers; agreeable delimiting of the major text components is essential; and proper constitutive criteria must come from "a close reading" (p. 45) of the text. "In short," Lee asserts, "a systematic discussion of the structure of Numbers 10:11–36:13, which accounts for generative inexplicit conceptualities underneath the text, is clearly called for" (p. 46).

Lee introduces chapter two with a statement of his central task: "to reconstruct the conceptual system of Numbers 10:11–36:13 at its highest level, that is, the macrostructure of the text, in order to understand better both its parts and the whole" (p. 47). To determine not only what the text says but also *why* the text says it, Lee offers conceptual analysis as the best approach. He contrasts conceptual analysis with leading methods of diachronic studies (source, form, and tradition criticism) and synchronic studies (canonical, new literary, rhetorical, genre, stylistic, and structural criticism). Lee develops his presentation of conceptual analysis in detail in the chapter and closes with an explanation of the relation of conceptual analysis to other methods of study (form criticism, rhetorical criticism, structuralism, and narrative criticism). Conceptual analysis is the best approach, according to Lee, because it "provides an empirically controlled

analysis interested in a methodological focus on the interrelationship between explicit statements found at the surface of a text and the implicit concepts that lie underneath it" (p. 72).

Chapter 3 is the heart of the book. Here Lee applies his methodology to the text, showing that Num 10:11–36:13 is a distinct unit, dividing that unit into its individual units, and presenting the resultant macrostructure of the text. Lee develops his argument for the unity of the text by discussing various suggestions for limits offered by others, demonstrating their weaknesses and showing the strength of his perspective. He further indicates the lack of agreement on the number of individual units or their divisions (citing Gray, Noth, Budd, Maier, Milgrom, Ashley, Olson, and Dozeman). Lee then offers his understanding of a proper division of the limited text into its thirty-six individual units. He discusses each unit in detail and shows why he feels it constitutes an individual unit. He closes the chapter with a detailed assembly of the text's macrostructure, arguing that "the conquest of Canaan, the land promised to the Israelites, is the goal of their continuing campaign and is the decisive criterion for the significance of the thirty-six units within Numbers 10:11–36:13" (p. 279). Lee divides this unified portion of Numbers into two major units: 10:11–14:45 expresses the failure of the campaign to enter the land, and 15:1–36:13 reveals the consequence of the Israelites' failure. God's punishment of Israel for its failure to enter the Promised Land and his forgiving promise to the succeeding generation are the two major divisions of the second section (15:1–36:13) and the focus of the major unit.

Won W. Lee has invested a tremendous amount of research in the production of this academic volume that makes a great contribution to the ongoing dialogue about methodology related to linguistic studies in general and biblical studies in particular. The book has value both for providing a succinct overview regarding various approaches to date and for its synchronic detailed analysis of a text employing the emerging method of conceptual analysis. Further, he demonstrates that this particularly problematic text is unified and is not a haphazard arrangement of collected story texts. Students in the academic pursuit of studies related to biblical structure from a synchronic perspective will appreciate this volume, as will those who are particularly interested in studies of the Pentateuch and Numbers.

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*A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel.* By Peter J. Leithart. Moscow, ID: Canon, 2003, 307 pp., \$18.00.

*A Son to Me* is not intended to be a standard, scholarly commentary and therefore lacks many of the features common to academic treatments of biblical books, such as discussions of date, provenance, authorship, etc. Leithart does provide a structural and historical overview (pp. 25–29) and a discussion of the formal structure of 1–2 Samuel (pp. 29–33), in which he suggests that the entire book can be seen as a large chiasm (p. 29). Indeed, he gives a chiastic outline at the beginning of almost every section (e.g. pp. 37, 52, 65–66, 70, 91–92). Leithart's primary concern in the book, however, is in reading the book typologically through the lens of Christological interpretation (pp. 9–23).

In this respect, *A Son to Me* may be unique among contemporary commentaries on 1–2 Samuel for, as Leithart explains, this style of interpretation began to fall into disrepute as long ago as the eighteenth century. Leithart briefly reviews some of the criticisms of the typological approach as well as the shift away from it, but then makes a

conscious decision to utilize this method: "Professionally suicidal as it may be, this book is precisely such an exercise in Christian interpretation, an effort to read the OT as a figure of the New, and to read both together as what the sociologists like to call a 'symbolic universe' for making sense of and acting faithfully in today's church and world. That is, this commentary has both a theological and a practical orientation, and both rest on a typological reading of an Old Testament book" (p. 9).

To facilitate this reading, Leithart outlines the main features of typological reading (pp. 9–10), and then elaborates on the meaning and methodology of Christological interpretation (pp. 10–23). While affirming "it is commonly said that typology should not be used to formulate doctrine," Leithart suggests that "this claim, popular as it is, is not only wrong; it is preposterous," and that "the whole of New Testament Christology is built on analogies (i.e. typologies) between Jesus and Aaron, Jesus and Moses, Jesus and Melchizedek, Jesus and David, Jesus and Jeremiah, and so on" (p. 15). He then concludes, "Far from being illegitimate grounds for theology, typology . . . is the only ground for understanding the theological contribution of the Old Testament" (p. 16).

Leithart is very much attuned to textual allusions to earlier biblical texts, and regularly suggests ways in which the stories of 1–2 Samuel can best be understood by hearing back to those stories. For example, he suggests the death of Saul, recorded at the close of 1 Samuel, recapitulates the battle of Aphek. There, a leader "fell" with his sons, and Eli died by "falling" off his chair. The word "fall" is used repeatedly in 1 Samuel 31: Saul "fell" on his sword, as did his armor bearer; Saul and his son were "fallen" on Mt. Gilboa; and David's "song of the bow" begins and ends with the phrase, "how have the mighty fallen" (p. 155). Similarly, at the end of 2 Samuel, David's purchase of the site for the temple is explained as a recapitulation of Abraham's purchase of a burial site in Genesis 23 (pp. 291–92).

In addition to understanding passages within 1–2 Samuel as pointing backward to Israel's earlier history, Leithart also often finds them pointing forward, illuminating not only Israel's later history, but present and future concerns of the Church as well. The song of Hannah, therefore, not only points to the revolution taking place within Israel, but becomes applicable as a prayer for ecclesiastical revolution in the Church (p. 43). David is naturally understood as foreshadowing the work of his greater Son, Jesus.

There are many commentaries available that deal with the historical, textual, and compositional difficulties of 1–2 Samuel. Few, however, dare to explore the book typologically and Christologically. For those in the Church or seminary who may find academic treatments of the minutiae of 1–2 Samuel somewhat burdensome and impractical, Leithart's *A Son to Me* may provide grist for fresh thought and exploration of ideas that are not only of immeasurable relevance, but are "useful for correction, reproof, and training in righteousness" (p. 23). Indeed, they may find the "Scripture . . . unleashed to function as revelation" (p. 23).

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*I and II Kings.* By Gary Inrig. Holman Old Testament Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003, 377 pp., \$19.99.

The Holman OT Commentaries are designed to "provide the church with the food to feed the spiritually hungry in an easily digestible format" (p. ix). The arrangement of material is easy to follow and user-friendly. The books of 1 and 2 Kings are divided into sections. Each section begins with an outline of that section, along with an overarching

theme for the section. In addition, each section contains the following sub-units: "Introduction," "Commentary," "Conclusion," "Life Application," "Prayer," "Deeper Discoveries," "Teaching Outline," and "Issues for Discussion."

This commentary focuses on making Scripture applicable for today. As the editor notes, "Bible teaching should result in new interest in the Scriptures, expanded Bible knowledge, discovery of specific scriptural principles, relevant applications, and exciting living" (p. ix). The application of Scripture is accomplished by devoting each section to a single main idea. This idea is then examined throughout the components of each section. For example, the section on 1 Kgs 9:1–10:29 revolves around the idea of success and significance.

The main weakness of the commentary is the tendency to give limited discussion to difficult topics. In the preface, the editor declares, "Today's church hungers for Bible teaching, and Bible teachers hunger for resources to guide them in teaching God's Word" (p. ix). Consequently, it is imperative that Bible teachers are provided with an understanding of legitimate interpretive options or assistance in understanding difficult issues. For example, the "Deeper Discoveries" section for 1 Kgs 22:23 discusses the lying spirit the Lord sent out to deceive Ahab (pp. 197–98). The author states this may simply be a dramatic presentation rather than a factual account of what actually happened. He then comments that other biblical passages "suggest that the Lord judicially permitted a demonic lying spirit to inspire the false prophets" (p. 197). However, the biblical text does not say the Lord *permitted* the spirit to go, but it was the Lord who *sent* the spirit. How is it possible for the Lord to send a lying spirit? On the surface, this appears to go against his character. Further discussion would be helpful in understanding the issues surrounding this perplexing difficulty.

Additional examples would include a more in-depth discussion concerning the chronology of the Divided Monarchy period. A one-paragraph discussion concluding in a definitive statement that the difficulty is solved by the phenomenon of co-regencies cannot adequately cover this topic. Another passage that would benefit from further discussion refers to the fury against Israel after the Moabite king sacrificed his oldest son (2 Kgs 3:27). The author lists a couple of options and promptly dismisses them. At this point, it would be beneficial to give textual support as to why these options are unsuitable. It is issues such as these that inspire people to purchase commentaries. Readers need to be equipped with this type of knowledge in order to accurately handle the word of truth. Additions such as those mentioned above along with suggestions for supplementary reading would allow the Bible teacher to further pursue these matters.

The primary strength of this commentary is its ability to make the biblical text applicable for today. The author has done an excellent job of using illustrations to bring out modern-day applications of biblical truth. However, if one is looking for more help in understanding the issues of the biblical text, I would suggest the Tyndale OT Commentary on 1 and 2 Kings. While it, too, is compact in size, it presents more information regarding various interpretative issues pertaining to the biblical text.

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*Encountering God in the Psalms.* By Michael E. Travers. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2003, 313 pp., \$15.99 paper.

Michael Travers has planted a refreshingly God-centered and application-oriented book in the landscape of Psalms studies. His purpose in writing is devotional—to challenge the reader to know and love God more and to apply the Psalms in daily life.

Although the work is devotional in nature, Travers has not omitted scholarship. He examines the major features of the study of Hebrew poetry: communicated experience, terseness/intensity, parallelisms, macro/micro structures, and figures of speech (simile, metaphor, image, symbol, personification, metonymy, and synecdoche). These features are critical for understanding the message of the Psalms. As an English professor, Travers has sophisticatedly supplemented the work with poems from non-canonical authors (e.g. Milton, Tennyson) when appropriate. The title of the book is true to its substance.

This work contains an introduction and two major sections. In the introduction, Travers encourages the reader to see the contemporary relevance of the Psalms and to encounter God in the Psalms through prayer and praise.

Chapters 1–3 comprise the first major section and outline Travers's methodology (chaps. 1–3). He holds that the Psalms are inspired in both genre and content; thus, understanding certain aspects of poetry is essential. He holds the following as the major aspects of poetry: communicated experience; heightened or concentrated language; structures and patterns; and figures of speech (chap. 1). He next addresses the five basic psalm genres—hymn, lament, royal, thanksgiving, and wisdom psalms (chap. 2). Finally, Travers presents his approach to the Psalms (chap. 3). He asks four guiding questions: (1) What is the overall effect of the psalm?; (2) What is the structure of the psalm?; (3) What are the figures of speech in the psalm, and what effects do they have?; and (4) What are the themes and theology in the psalm? Respectively, these questions address the impression the psalm gives to the reader, the major sections and individual parallelisms contained in the psalm, the understanding gleaned from the use of figurative language, and the exegetical truths from the text. Following these questions, Travers applies the truths to modern life. He specifically applies these questions to the selected psalms in chapters 5–12.

Chapters 4–13 comprise the second major section and focus on the application of methodology. Chapter 4, which could be placed in the first major section, is the precursor for Travers's theocentric methodology. In it, he highlights Moses' encounter with God as a basis for seeing who God is and what God does. Like Moses' encounter with God at Mt. Sinai, the God-man encounter reflects the basic bifid nature of the Psalms. Travers also uses Psalms 18, 23, 89, and 104 to demonstrate God's revelation of himself—much like his revelation to Moses.

Chapters 5–13, the book's third major section, show Travers's methodology applied to the gamut of psalm types. Two of the great hymns, Psalms 19 and 104, reveal God as creator in chapter 5, and Psalms 33 and 103 reveal the unending love of the covenant-making God in chapter 6. Chapters 7 and 8 respectively examine two royal psalms (84 and 96) and two messianic psalms (22 and 45). Next, chapter 9 examines the laments of Psalms 27 and 79 while chapter 10 offers a thoughtful and virtuous treatment of Psalm 59, an imprecatory psalm. With its treatment of Psalm 51, chapter 11 reveals how unworthy of forgiveness all people are, and chapter 12 concludes the exegetical chapters with the wisdom gleaned from Psalm 111 and 112—true wisdom translates knowledge into godly living. Chapter 13 closes the book with a review of the attributes of God as seen throughout the preceding chapters. A non-exhaustive appendix of the attributes of God as seen in each psalm and a basic-level bibliography conclude the work.

Travers's book is a good, non-exhaustive resource for pastors, teachers, and devotional readers of the Bible—though a reader might hope for a complete treatment of every psalm in the future. Travers sounds the clarion call to see God in the psalms, and this call is refreshing given the pervasive anthropocentric world view in much of biblical scholarship. The review statements on the back cover are accurate, and the vignettes contained throughout the work are helpful. The vignettes will aid a reader in future reference. Travers is unashamedly evangelical in his presentation; his neologism, "theotropic" ("inclined to God," p. 156), highlights this fact. His treatment of the imprecatory

psalms is insightful, and all pastors, teachers, and scholars would benefit from chapter 10.

This book is not designed to be in the same classification as a work like Adele Berlin's *The Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, and some scholars will question the small bibliography and the large number of references to VanGemenen and C. S. Lewis. However, Travers's purpose is clear, his structure is precise, and his theocentric (dare I say "Christocentric"?) approach demonstrates that poetic scholarship and practical application can be brought together.

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*Psalms 73–150*. By Richard J. Clifford. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003, 334 pp., \$20.00 paper.

*Psalms 73–150* is the second volume of Richard J. Clifford's contribution to the Abingdon OT Commentaries series. The commentary relies on the introduction to the book of Psalms found in the volume dealing with Psalms 1–72 and written by the same author. As such, without any further introduction apart from the traditional introduction of the series, the commentary jumps straight into the analysis of Psalm 73. As in *Psalms 1–72*, Clifford evaluates each psalm by three criteria: literary analysis, exegetical analysis, and theological/ethical analysis.

The introduction gives an accurate description by stating that this commentary series attempts "to provide compact, critical commentaries on the books of the Old Testament for the use of theological students and pastors" (p. 9). Evangelical pastors and students will do well to keep this in mind, since Clifford's critical approach to the text or the history of the text does not always conform to an evangelical understanding of the development of the text. Having stated this, it must be acknowledged that Clifford's commentary is eloquent, containing careful analyses and filled with erudite insights.

Due to the format of the commentary series, each psalm is covered in about four pages, except for Psalm 119, which receives seven pages to cover the 176 verses of the psalm. Clifford's analysis is therefore succinct, with as much information packed into the few pages allotted to each psalm as one could possibly hope for. It is clear from reading this commentary that Clifford is well-informed on Psalms scholarship and that he has clearly struggled with the text to bring out its meaning. There are many references to extrabiblical sources from a variety of cultures such as Ugarit, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. However, here we must observe one small weakness regarding references to Ugaritic literature: no text reference numbers are given. While text quotation in Ugaritic literature is not standardized, giving at least one of the reference numbers (e.g. KTU) would have allowed serious students to check the references for themselves.

A greatly appreciated feature of this commentary is the description of how each psalm fits into the context of the preceding and following psalms. Furthermore, Clifford gives a constant stream of examples of intertextuality with various parts of the OT, showing how the psalm uses other biblical material or how the psalm is used by other biblical texts.

On the other hand, Clifford follows the strange approach of counting words in sections, which he uses as hints for the structure or unity of the psalm in question (e.g. pp. 16, 21, 38, 49). But even if one wants to follow Clifford's methodology, it is often quite unclear how he counted the words. For example, in his discussion of Psalm 80, Clifford identifies two parts, with each part divided by a refrain. In the first division of part 1 (vv. 1–2a), he counts nineteen words. I never came up with that count. Clifford

also counts Hebrew words but uses the English verse numbering. Furthermore, he never explains to which section verse 2b belongs. It remains unclear how the counting of words can help us in determining structure or unity of this psalm.

A better feature of the commentary is the theological-ethical analysis. Pastors and students alike will greatly appreciate this section. Clifford provides interesting insights that help the reader in the application process. For example, in the theological-ethical analysis of Psalm 83 Clifford writes: "Can a plea for violent intervention be Christian prayer? Yes, for the psalm is a prayer for the introduction of divine rule in the world, for 'the reign of God' . . . Instead of advocating reliance on human resources, the psalmist entrusts the people's entire security to the Lord, powerful and just" (p. 70). Clifford often has similar provocative insights in the exegetical section of his commentary.

It is probably in the area of recreating the psalmist's world view that I differ with Clifford most strongly. Clifford understands the psalmist to have a similar world view to the ancient Near Eastern cultures—that the earth was a disk held in the hands of the gods. Clifford attributes this holding of the earth to the Lord (pp. 116–17). He also seems to think the psalmist holds to a henotheistic point of view. Furthermore, Clifford sees the psalmist really using mythical language with its origin in the surrounding Near Eastern cultures, but then adapted to fit the monotheistic culture of Israel (p. 117). Clifford regularly equates the Lord with the Canaanite storm god. On the plus side, Clifford's vast knowledge of Ugaritic, Akkadian, and Egyptian literature enables him to recognize when the psalmist uses terminology and ideas from surrounding cultures (e.g. Psalm 104).

The commentary ends with a brief bibliography and a short list of commentaries and other works, supplemented with a short, but for the student helpful, annotation of the book. A short index of the 150 psalms, arranged according to psalm type, is given, followed by a very brief subject index, whose brevity undermines its usefulness.

Overall, this is a good, well-informed commentary, marked by brevity, written by a scholar who knows his field and is willing to reflect on these ancient prayers with the modern reader in mind. Some views presented in the commentary might raise some eyebrows in evangelical circles, but all in all this should be a welcome addition to any student's or pastor's library. One might quibble that the commentary does not provide many new insights, but that was of course not the aim of this commentary in the first place. Even for the scholar, this might be a welcome addition to his library since it provides a quick, succinct, and learned review of all of the psalms. Keeping my reservations in mind concerning the presentation of the psalmist's world view, I am happy to have this volume on my bookshelf.

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*Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs.* By David George Moore and Daniel L. Akin. Holman Old Testament Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2003, 367 pp., \$19.99.

In general terms commentaries fall into two classes: academic commentaries full of scholarship but often not very helpful to preachers, and devotional commentaries intended to be helpful to preachers but that often make academics wince. As a seminary professor who also pastors a church, I am constantly looking for commentaries that address both of the roles I fill.

The Holman OT Commentary series belongs squarely in the devotional commentary camp. The format for each passage begins with a sermon-like introduction. The commentary body gives the main idea and supporting ideas for each section, along with

brief comment on individual verses. After this, several sections address the significance of the passage for the world in which we live, with a brief prayer, further exploration of the ideas of the chapter, and discussion questions that could be used by individuals or small groups.

So did I wince? Moore's commentary on Ecclesiastes impressed me as a solid synthesis of substantial scholarship. The seven-page bibliography at the end contained almost all the major works I would expect to see. Moreover, throughout the text it was evident the author had read and assimilated these materials and was not merely listing them for show. Moore takes the approach of "functional Solomonic authorship": after a judicious review of scholarly opinion, he concludes the issue is complex and debatable, yet "whoever wrote Ecclesiastes certainly had Solomon in mind" (p. 6). Moore describes the purpose of this "realistic" book as offering an honest and hopeful picture of how life ought to be lived, even when it is not clear to us what God is doing. Though life is a mystery that does not lend itself to simplistic answers, nonetheless it is God's world in which life is to be celebrated as a good creation of God. One perspective that would have enriched the discussion would have been consideration of the impact of the Fall on life "under the sun." If Adam had not sinned, would there have been a time for war or for death or for loss (Ecclesiastes 3)? The allusions to Genesis that Moore rightly observes throughout the book tend to point us back not merely to this world as belonging to God, but also to this world as existing under God's curse.

Daniel Akin's section on the Song of Songs was more problematic to the academic in me, even though it was filled with homiletical helps. The bibliography is much briefer—less than two pages—and the comment section on each passage relatively lightweight. Overall, it reads more like a marriage enrichment seminar than a commentary; it is full of useful charts, statistics, and practical insights, presented in an accessible and engaging style. In fact, pastors seeking resources for a series on sex will find much that is helpful here. There was less, though, that would help them substantively engage the biblical text.

Akin suggests the book "presents the one true love of Solomon's life, perhaps his first wife, or it may be an ideal presentation of love to which Solomon aspired" (p. 136). He understands the purpose of the book to be "a revelation of the nature of genuine human love between a man and a woman, love as God intended it to be" (p. 139). Thus, the commentary itself remains almost entirely on the plane of human relationships between a man and a woman. It is the exact opposite of the allegorizing approach that views the Song of Songs as solely concerned with God and not at all interested in human relationships. Even when dealing with the concluding pericope, which speaks of "love as strong as death" and uses the theologically evocative biblical metaphors of vineyards and gardens, Akin gives no sense that in preaching or meditating on this passage one's eyes might be lifted from the very best earthly marriage offers to God's transcendent love for his bride. Personally, I think Song of Songs has more to teach us (though not less) than God's guide to maximum sex.

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*The Prophet and his Message: Reading Old Testament Prophecy Today.* By Michael J. Williams. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2003, x + 220 pp., \$12.99.

Prophetic literature is an enigma. Its origin, nature, canonization, function, royal role, and relation to the covenant are matters of mystery and debate. Added to the maelstrom of mystery is one final bugaboo: to the laity, the prophetic literature appears to

be a confusing hodge-podge of recriminations, aspersions, and obloquies. This is precisely why Michael J. Williams, from Calvin Theological Seminary, wrote *The Prophet and His Message: Reading Old Testament Prophecy Today*. He writes, “[Because of] a general lack of understanding about how to deal with the Old Testament . . . [it is] my goal in this book to provide some guidance for interested laypersons” (p. ix–x).

Written from a Reformed perspective, it divides into three sections. Chapters 1–4 define and explain the role of the prophet; chapter 5 describes Jesus as the consummate prophet; and chapter 6 describes the prophetic role of the Church. In chapter 1, Williams explains what prophets were not. They were not merely ecstasies, social reformers, messengers, and miracle workers. In chapter 2, he explains what prophets were. They were often iconoclastic individuals called by God to declare messages of woe and weal. In chapter 3, he describes what prophets did. They communicated to Israel through words and actions. In chapter 4, he describes the prophetic role of Israel—to call the surrounding nations to repentance. In chapter 5, Williams argues that Jesus was the consummate prophet because he experienced hunger; he represented the people of God through prayer; and he lived an exemplary life, just like the prophets. In chapter 6, he argues that the Church ought to declare God’s truth, to live God’s truth, and to represent God, just like the prophets did. Behind every chapter is an attempt to arrive at theological unity where the prophets, Jesus, and the Church are prophetic.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this book is its aim to communicate to the laity. This is especially important because the market for prophetic literature is often too complicated or too speculative. *The Prophet and His Message* successfully balances accessibility with informed exegetical synthesis. Further, a sensitive pastoral concern permeates every page, making it all the more accessible and user-friendly. Particularly helpful are his questions at the end of each chapter for further reflection. For example, in chapter 5 he asks, “How has Israel fulfilled her prophetic calling in your life?” (p. 138). These and other questions will stimulate careful thought, reflection, and healthy conversation in many different settings.

There are two weaknesses to the book: oversimplification and the ephemeral nature of popular-level books. Regarding oversimplification, many issues concerning the prophets and prophetic literature are a matter of debate, and when there is no real consensus on the nature of a prophet, the prophetic categories in chapters 1–4 may be too rigid and ahistorical. Accordingly, these categories result in an overly synchronic relationship between the prophets, Jesus, and the Church. Second, the ephemeral nature of popular-level writing often makes for risky investment.

A helpful introductory book to the laity, *The Prophet and His Message* is best suited for church contexts. In a time when there are many excellent books on the subject such as Blenkinsopp’s *A History of Prophecy in Israel*, Petersen’s *The Prophetic Literature: An Introduction*, and Chisholm’s *Handbook on the Prophets*, it is difficult to foresee this as a standard seminary or college textbook. However, because *The Prophet and His Message* is simple and easy to understand, it fills a void. In this respect, my impression is favorable.

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*Ancient Judaism and Christian Origins: Diversity, Continuity, and Transformation.*  
By George W. E. Nickelsburg. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003, xxii + 264 pp., \$23.00 paper.

Two overarching issues provide the impetus for this book. The first is the impact of new methods and the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls upon current perceptions of

Judaism in the Greco-Roman period. The second is the impact of these two developments on the study of Christian origins. Nickelsburg (Emeritus Professor of Religion at the University of Iowa) brings the mature insight of an eminent scholar who has spent four decades on various aspects of this task. He presents a synthesis of major developments in the second half of the twentieth century for a broad audience of biblical scholars, students, clergy, and informed laypeople. He concludes that Christianity originated as a Jewish eschatological sect with many affinities to (as well as differences from) Enochic Judaism and the Qumran community. He especially hopes the book will engage people who are involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Although this book will not be viewed within the guild as the *magnum opus* of Nickelsburg's scholarly career, it will hopefully have great influence on the wider religious community.

After a brief introduction which sets the agenda, Nickelsburg presents his synthesis in seven chapters that discuss (1) Scripture and tradition; (2) Torah and the righteous life; (3) God's activity in behalf of humanity; (4) agents of God's activity; (5) eschatology; (6) contexts and settings; and (7) conclusions and justifications. There are indices of passages and authors cited but not of topics discussed. Relegating discussion of recent scholarship to forty pages of endnotes, where limited yet substantive interaction occurs, enhances the readability and continuity of the book.

This book is well written, and its argument is clear. Yet there is reason to question the postponement of discussion concerning contexts and settings until near the end of the book. Nickelsburg made this decision self-consciously (p. 147), but the reasons for it are not convincing. This material is broadly foundational to specific matters of methodological and historical complexity which are repeatedly emphasized in the book, and it would likely have been more appropriate as chapter 1 than as chapter 6.

Among the many helpful features of the book are several that merit special attention. The discussion (along with the accompanying chart) on the covenantal context of biblical Torah as instruction rather than legalism (pp. 32–34) is valuable as a clear statement of the religion of the Hebrew Bible. Similarly noteworthy is the presentation of eschatology in Second Temple Jewish texts not as a mere topic of doctrine but as the pervasive perspective on human existence and the horizon from which Scripture is interpreted (pp. 120, 190). Another illuminating discussion presents the variegated eschatological interpretations of the Servant in Isaiah 52–53 in pre-Christian texts such as 2 Maccabees 7; Wisdom of Solomon 2, 5; and *1 Enoch* 37–71 (pp. 17–20; 105–7). The discussion of the Son of Man in Dan 7:13 in the context of various agents of God's activity is similarly useful (pp. 103–5; 110–11).

The balanced discussion of the putative relationship of the Qumran community to the Essenes is perhaps exemplary of the book as a whole (pp. 167–75). Nickelsburg takes pains to present both sides of the question, and one might guess that his commitment to complexity would lead him to stress the differences between Qumran and the Essenes as described by Josephus, Philo, and Hippolytus. However, his conclusion affirms the majority consensus of an Essenic community at Qumran, while admitting that this approach requires the Essene movement to be understood as more broad and diverse than is often realized.

This book will without a doubt be useful for its intended audiences. Nickelsburg writes with the air of one who is very familiar with the primary ancient texts and current scholarly treatments of those texts. Synthetic works like this inevitably tend toward generalizations, which specialists decry, but Nickelsburg consistently acknowledges the complexity of the material. The value of this book is in its comprehensive awareness of the primary texts and the resulting complexity of the questions that need to be asked, whether those of ancient social history or those of current theological matters. But evangelicals will have some difficulties with Nickelsburg's relatively low view of the historicity, consistency, and authority of the NT (e.g. pp. 86, 136–37, 143, 159, 164–65, 187, 189, 192). For instance, Paul may have been right to believe "all Israel will be saved"

but wrong that faith in Jesus as Messiah will be the means of that salvation (p. 199). Frequent generalizations about Paul's alleged rejection of the Torah are particularly problematic (pp. 30, 54, 57, 187, 199). As impressive as Nickelsburg's grasp of Second Temple Judaism is, NT scholars will be concerned about his relatively lesser grasp of their field. This is perhaps indicated when one notes that the "Index of Passages Cited" contains almost nine pages of texts from the Hebrew Bible and Second Temple Jewish literature and just over four pages of texts from the NT and early Christian literature.

Nickelsburg's regular discussions of NT matters as part and parcel with Second Temple Jewish literature (e.g. pp. 26–27, 38–39, 42–43, 51–58, 79–87, 108–16, 135–44, 182–84) make the book a viable choice for a survey textbook on either ancient Judaism or the NT in its original religious setting. He models well his conclusions that scholars must proceed with humility, awareness of their prejudices, and sensitivity to the diversity of both early Judaism and Christianity (p. 198). The author's belief in "the inherent historicity of good theology" (p. 199) leads to his insistence that current discussions of Jewish-Christian relations should be informed by the ancient texts that set Christianity's origins within Second Temple Judaism. With this all evangelicals must agree.

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*Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East.* By Martti Nissinen, with contributions by C. L. Seow and Robert K. Ritner; edited by Peter Machinist. Writings from the Ancient World 12. Atlanta: SBL, 2003, xxii + 273 pp., \$29.95.

*Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East* is the twelfth volume in the series Writings from the Ancient World, which seeks to bring together documents that have been recovered from the ancient Near East. A more apt title might be "Non-biblical Prophets and Prophecy in the Ancient Near East," for the book does not contain or cite biblical material.

For Nissinen, "Prophecy . . . is the human transmission of allegedly divine messages. . . [prophets] act as direct mouthpieces of gods whose messages they communicate" (p. 1). Prophecy is seen as a fourfold process: (1) the divine sender; (2) the message; (3) the human messenger; (4) the recipient(s) of the message (p. 2). Prophecy, therefore, is distinct from "inductive" divination and is not included in the book.

The author clearly acknowledges the difficulty in deciding whether a given text has value in understanding prophecy. He excludes those that are not compatible with his working definition of prophecy or those whose reference to prophecy is yet to be substantiated. The texts he includes are grouped into three categories: oracle reports, quotations of prophetic messages in letters, and texts that refer to an individual as a prophet (pp. 8–9).

The book is a collection of more than 140 texts discovered to date in the Near East, but not including biblical material, that have a bearing on prophets and prophecy. Most of them have been extracted from earlier published works.

Approximately half of the identified texts were found at Mari and are to be dated from the first half of the second millennium BC. The other major block came from Nineveh during the Neo-Assyrian period (8th–7th Century BC). The collection is completed with two oracles from Eshnunna, miscellaneous cuneiform sources, six West Semitic sources, which include three Lachish ostraca and the Deir 'Alla Plaster texts, and the "Report of Wenamon."

The translator has done a good job assembling the texts and seeking to make sense of them. The task has been daunting, for almost none of the texts have survived intact

and some of them are mere fragments. He explains, "To use an archaeological metaphor, the sources collected in this volume constitute only the defective set of sherds, of which the badly broken vessel must be restored" (p. 4). In addition, at Mari, the letters were written by persons other than the prophets, which further complicates the picture (see p. 15). He acknowledges that one must resort to conjecture in the restoration process.

Each letter or document is numbered, with the speaker and the recipient identified. Before the transliteration and the English translation of the text is given, the reader is informed as to what text is under consideration, where a photograph or copy of the tablet can be found, and where one might turn for further elaboration and discussion of the text. Each section is preceded by a brief introduction of the place and history where the texts were found.

The book is geared primarily to the scholar interested in the history, culture, and religions of the ancient Near East. Old Testament scholars will also find the book useful in drawing possible parallels with the prophets of Israel. For example, OT prophets sometimes proclaimed God's word after acting out the truth. One has but to remember Ezekiel's shave with a sword (Ezekiel 5), Jeremiah's ruined loincloth (Jeremiah 13), and Jeremiah's breaking of an earthenware flask (Jeremiah 19). In text #16 we read, "[I gave] him a lamb and he devoured it raw [in fr]ont of the city gate. He assembled the elders in front of the gate of Saggartum and said: 'A devouring will take place!'"

Most of these texts with their translations and discussions have appeared in journals and books over the past fifty years or more. The value of this book is that it brings together these texts into one volume, and provides a valuable resource tool in English.

The book also serves as a valuable corrective. In the past, some scholars have made more of the non-biblical "prophetic" material than can be warranted. Now, with the ready access to the texts in this volume, their excesses can be corrected or dismissed.

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*Testament of Abraham*. By Dale C. Allison, Jr. Commentaries on Early Jewish Literature. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2003, xvi + 527 pp., \$98.00.

While we are used to detailed commentaries on canonical books, we are not accustomed to having them on non-canonical literature. The *Testament of Abraham* is one of those non-canonical books that has called out for a detailed commentary; it has been well served by Dale Allison's work.

The first reason this work calls out for a commentary is that its textual history is complex. After discussing the Greek texts, Allison must also describe the relationship of the two major recensions, the long and the short. A further problem is that, while Egypt is the likely place of origin and the first century the most likely time of writing of some form of the *Testament*, the language continued to be updated over the years so that our present *Testament* (or *Testaments*, if one considers the two recensions separate works) is medieval. All of this takes some sorting out, which Allison does well, using charts and diagrams as well as prose discussion. What I most appreciated is that where he does not have information he resists the temptation to speculate but simply indicates what we know and what we do not know. This produces a less satisfying result for those who want closed arguments, but it also produces a more honest work.

An example of Allison's judiciousness is his approach to the claims regarding the influence of the *Testament of Abraham* on NT literature. Most of these claims he quickly dismisses as lacking evidence (indeed, he feels that the influence mostly flowed the

other way, that the *Testament of Abraham* may show the influence of Matthew). However, when it comes to Troy Martin's argument ("The TestAbr and the Background of 1 Pet 3:6," *ZNW* 90 [1999] 139–46) that 1 Pet 3:6 reflects Sarah's repeated reference to Abraham as "my lord" in the *Testament of Abraham*, his conclusion is "uncertain." Given that Allison outright dismisses all other claims, he is indicating both the strength of Martin's argument and the fact that it is too narrowly focused to bear the weight of a whole argument for dependency (rather than the *Testament of Abraham* demonstrating a re-imagining of Sarah that was part of the *Zeitgeist* of the first century CE). I was impressed with the judiciousness of Allison's assessment.

A second reason for a commentary on the *Testament of Abraham* is that modern readers may tend to take it too seriously. Allison argues in his section on "Literary Themes and Leading Ideas" that this is an anti-testament; i.e. he argues that it parodies the testamental genre and that it parodies Abraham (who comes across as full of neither faith nor obedience). The *Testament of Abraham* focuses on the somber theme of death, but Abraham's approach to death is through denial, bargaining, and depression, not acceptance (in fact, despite the title, Abraham never makes a testament, and so never comes to terms with his dying). These observations are important in that scholars searching in the work for Jewish or Christian background material may miss the irony embedded in the work as a whole and fail to catch the humor. However, despite assisting scholars to see the humor, Allison never answers this critical question: How deliberate is the irony? In other words, is there evidence that the original author thought that the original readers would get the irony? Perhaps that is a question that we can never answer, but it would be interesting to explore. If they were expected to get the irony, it shows that they could be humorous about Abraham and death, and if they did not get it (as medieval writers did not get it), then maybe the irony is our creation because we read this text over against canonical texts. The earliest readers may have looked at it quite independently, perhaps even as something of a canonical text. (Of course, it is a bit of an anachronism to use the category "canonical" for the first century CE, if that is when the work originated.)

The introduction to this commentary (divided as it is into 10 segments: Greek Texts, Other Versions, Relation of the Two Greek Recensions, Jewish or Christian?, Local Origin, Date, Genre, Structure, Literary Themes and Leading Ideas, and Bibliography) gives way to the commentary itself, which makes up the bulk of the work. Each of the 20 chapters begins with a short bibliography on the chapter, and then presents the text (in English translation) of both recensions in parallel columns. Next come textual notes on the long recension, which has the more difficult textual history. Finally there is the commentary itself, which first introduces the chapter (making comparisons between the two recensions) and then discusses it verse by verse. The commentary follows the long recension, since Allison judges the short recension to be an abbreviation of the long recension. Still, the fact that there are two texts means that throughout the commentary he is forced to do source criticism and redaction criticism, since the points being made in the two recensions sometimes differ. (As a comparison, picture trying to write a single commentary on both Matthew and Mark, following Matthew as a whole, but noting where Mark has a different emphasis.) While this approach results in a complex commentary text, it is absolutely necessary given that we have two versions of one work. Allison pulls it off without introducing unnecessary complexity. His relatively frequent use of charts to show structure helps him do this, but in the end it is the fact that he maintains a clear picture of where he is going and manages to communicate his own orientation to the reader that makes the commentary text as clear as it is.

It is unlikely that the *Testament of Abraham* will ever be on the favorite reading list of most biblical scholars or pastors (even though Allison points out that it was the favorite work of his children among the various pseudepigrapha that he read to them).

All the same, it is an important work for understanding first century CE (and later) Judaism. Dale Allison is to be commended for writing and Walter de Gruyter for publishing this work (indeed, since this is part of a series of commentaries on non-canonical Jewish literature, they are to be commended on the whole series). It will greatly assist us in understanding this important work. It is my hope that this work will not only appear on the shelves of any responsible theological library but also that biblical scholars and pastors will not blanch at the \$98 price tag but will add it to their own personal libraries (which sales might assist in lowering the price of future volumes in this series). Such a purchase would reveal that they really want to understand the Judaism of this period rather than simply to mine it for convenient parallels to the NT.

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*Jesus according to Scripture: Restoring the Portrait from the Gospels.* By Darrell L. Bock. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002, 704 pp., \$39.99.

Darrell Bock is no stranger to the readership of this *Journal*, both because of his extensive writings and because of his past presidency of the Evangelical Theological Society (2001). *Jesus according to Scripture* is the second in a set of at least three works on the life of Jesus and the Gospels. The first volume in this series, *Studying the Historical Jesus*, set forth an overview of the sources and methods for studying the historical Jesus and offered an introduction to the cultural context of Jesus' ministry. The third volume in this series, entitled *The Jesus Reader*, will provide the student with a number of the ancient texts relevant to the study of the life of Jesus.

In *Jesus according to Scripture* Bock has provided an insightful look into the presentation of Jesus given by each evangelist. Being neither a harmony of the Gospels nor a typical "life of Christ" textbook, *Jesus according to Scripture* looks at texts both within the context of the Gospel where they are found as well as looking horizontally across the Gospels, comparing the various presentations of similar teaching or miraculous activity. In this way, Bock seeks to preserve the integrity of each individual author's development of the life of Jesus and examine the different emphases that can be discerned by a comparison of the different Gospels.

The first 400 pages of Bock's book place emphasis on the Synoptic Gospels. Bock only occasionally refers to how a teaching or miracle is treated in John's Gospel. It is not clear until later that the Gospel of John is dealt with at length. In what amounts to approximately a 150-page running commentary on John, Bock traces themes and motifs throughout John. After he has concluded this extensive examination of the four Gospels, Bock spends about 90 pages drawing together the teaching of Jesus concerning central themes, chief of which is Jesus' understanding of the kingdom of God, especially as it relates to Jesus' titles and teaching.

Throughout *Jesus according to Scripture* Bock provides a plethora of interesting items. One of Bock's primary concerns is to show how well the Gospels fit together when studied in the manner Bock does in this work, and he is largely successful. Rather than jumping to the conclusion that the Gospels are either contradictory or that they did not know certain pericopes, Bock shows how each evangelist makes use of the tradition of Jesus in his own way. Therefore, Luke or Matthew often omit a passage because they had previously presented a text elsewhere that teaches the same basic point. Bock also argues effectively for the essential historicity of various passages, being especially cogent

when showing that certain passages that are frequently denied to the historical Jesus are best understood as coming from Jesus.

Although not a commentary as such, Bock does interact with numerous scholars in the footnotes, often carrying on rather extended debates in these notes. One of the features of Bock's presentation is that he begins each chapter with two or three quotations from authors who have written about either the Gospels or the life of Jesus. These quotations pique the reader's interest as well as showing the breadth of Bock's knowledge of the relevant literature. As might be expected given Bock's monumental two-volume commentary on Luke in the BECNT series, Bock's most significant insights and discussions come from the Lukan texts, although I was also impressed with the careful and helpful presentation of the Johannine material.

Although Darrell Bock is a research professor at Dallas Theological Seminary and has written in support of progressive dispensationalism, relatively little in this work would be objectionable to someone who takes a more covenantal approach. It is primarily in his theological synthesis section, particularly in his discussion of the implications of the kingdom, that Bock's dispensational leanings are most clearly seen. Yet, even here, Bock presents his views in a manner that is not offensive to those who take a different interpretation of the data.

As one might suspect, if one has read Bock's marvelous chapter, "The Words of Jesus in the Gospels: Live, Jive or Memorex," in *Jesus under Fire* (ed. Michael J. Wilkins and J. P. Moreland; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995), Bock is very open to the evangelists reorganizing Jesus material, shaping it to fit their individual needs. Thus, he argues that Luke has re-ordered the temptations of Jesus to have the climatic temptation be the one dealing with the temple, since this fits Luke's theological perspective. He allows for the possibility that John has taken a later cleansing of the temple by Jesus and placed it early in his Gospel "as a type of foreshadowing capsule of Jesus' conflict with the leadership and their failure to appreciate his authority." However, given the differences between the two accounts and the specific setting that each Gospel gives to the cleansing, Bock believes that it is slightly more likely that there were two cleansings rather than one.

Because of pastoral and college commitments, I reread large portions of *Jesus according to Scripture* and enjoyed and benefited significantly more from the second reading. There is a wealth of helpful and interesting information in this book. The most valuable feature of the book is Bock's careful analysis of how each passage is used in the Gospel where it is found, as well as how it is used or modified in the other Synoptic Gospels. By doing this, Bock has established the fundamental unity of the Gospel accounts of Jesus, against the tendency of much redaction criticism to separate and play one Gospel over against another.

The primary problem with the book is the audience for which it is intended. Bock says, "This textbook is designed for students taking classes in the Gospels or on the life of Christ and for pastors who wish to study the life and teaching of Jesus." Unfortunately this book reads so slowly and has so much information packed in it, that it is far too cumbersome for college-level life of Christ classes. Most pastors will find themselves tiring of the extensive treatment that Bock gives the Gospels, while most seminary classes will find more traditional life of Christ texts to be more compatible with the content of the class.

The evangelical world has been presented with a significant work, which carefully and meticulously goes through each passage in the four Gospels and shows its significance both within that Gospel and across the Gospel accounts. This work needed to be done, since it shows both the historical plausibility of much of the Gospel accounts as well as the fundamental unity of the four Gospels. Thus, the evangelical world stands in debt to Darrell Bock for this wonderful presentation of Jesus, as seen through the

eyes of the four evangelists. As a reference work, this volume will be a welcome addition to every scholar's and pastor's library, though most will not find it as helpful if they try to read through it as they would a more traditional life of Christ text.

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*Matthew's Trilogy of Parables: The Nation, the Nations and the Reader in Matthew 21:28–22:14.* By Wesley G. Olmstead. SNTSMS 127. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, x + 281 pp., \$65.00.

Olmstead's monograph offers the thesis that the three parables of Matt 21:28–22:14 pronounce judgment on the nation of Israel as well as its leadership, so that a "new nation . . . defined along ethical and not ethnic lines" is formed (p. 165). His work substantiates the multifaceted purposes of the trilogy of parables. In addition to the polemical emphasis of the parables, theocentric and salvation-historical interests are evident. Most particularly, Olmstead understands the paraenetic purpose of the trilogy to be emphasized by Matthew; the reader is called to obedience through the parables. Olmstead employs redaction criticism and narrative criticism to argue his thesis, simultaneously demonstrating significant compatibility between the methods.

In his introductory chapters (1–2), Olmstead demonstrates that redaction criticism and narrative criticism can function in a mutually corrective fashion. By looking at the poles of narrative integrity and fragmentation, history and fiction, author and reader, Olmstead plots a middle course by drawing on strengths of both methodologies. He then provides a brief history of parables research, which has suffered particularly from the tendency toward fragmentation. Olmstead draws upon narrative criticism's attention to the Gospel context as an appropriate antidote. Rather than focusing first on *Sitz im Leben* reconstruction, Olmstead attends to the present form of the parable trilogy. He also acknowledges both performative and propositional language in parables, disavowing what he terms a "false and unnecessary" dichotomy between the two (p. 20). Finally, he argues that the parable trilogy of Matt 21:28–22:14 can be attributed to the evangelist himself (versus pre-Matthean tradition), laying the groundwork for the redaction analysis of the trilogy in the book's final chapters.

In chapters 3 and 4 the wider narrative context of the three parables is investigated. Olmstead begins by examining the portrayal of the Jewish leadership and the Jewish people, commenting on each passage that portrays first both and then either group. After analyzing each relevant pericope, Olmstead concludes from contextual indicators that the judgment of the parable trilogy is targeted at but not limited to Jewish leadership. Instead, Israel's national privilege is suspended, though Olmstead quickly concedes that the Jewish crowds are portrayed sympathetically and that "suspension of privilege does not mean suspension of mission" (p. 70).

In chapter 4 Olmstead investigates Matthew's contextual landscape in reference to the Gentile mission. He distinguishes the typically positive portrayal of Gentile characters from the occasional use of anti-Gentile language in Matthew (e.g. 20:25), suggesting that the latter may more generically refer to unbelievers (p. 82). The positive portrayal of Gentile characters along with references to a future Gentile mission lead Olmstead to conclude that the new people of God introduced at 21:43 are of "trans-ethnic composition" (p. 91; i.e. Israel's judgment leads to Gentile inclusion).

In the final chapters Olmstead conducts narrative-critical and redaction-critical analyses of the parable trilogy. From a narrative perspective he contends that the

trilogy fulfills primarily a paraenetic function. Israel's judgment provides a warning against presumption to Matthew's community. Indications of paraenetic purposes are found at culminating points of all three parables, including the "way of righteousness" introduced in the parable of the two sons (21:32); the transferal of the kingdom from Israel to a "*trans-ethnic* community" producing fruit in the parable of the tenants (p. 117; cf. 21:43); and the eschatological warning against presumption of participation without proper obedience in the parable of the wedding feast (22:11–14). Olmstead concludes that, while polemic and salvation-historical concerns are essential to the trilogy, "these parables function chiefly to call the reader to faithful obedience . . . in the wake of Israel's dramatic failure" (p. 128).

In the redaction-critical analysis of chapter 6, Olmstead seeks to identify Matthew's editorial shaping of the trilogy. Although he offers tentative conclusions on sources for each of the three parables, he asserts that their current form is thoroughly Matthean. Olmstead then gives detailed redactional support for Matthew's polemical, theocentric, salvation-historical, and paraenetic purposes. Specifically, Matthew intends to communicate the serious failure of Israel, especially her leaders; to highlight that it is Israel's God whom Israel has rejected; to explain the historical impetus for justified judgment upon Israel and the extension of her privilege to the nations; and to exhort the reader to "[yield] to God the obedience that is rightfully his" (p. 159).

Olmstead's monograph is carefully organized and well written. He demonstrates solid redaction-critical study, good narrative impulses, and carefully nuanced exegesis. For example, his brief discussion of Matthew's anti-Gentile language is sensitive to contextual and linguistic concerns. In addition, Olmstead interacts thoroughly and insightfully with Matthean scholarship by providing fully-orbed assessments of seminal works related to his topic, regularly engaging opposing views and conversing adeptly with Matthean scholars of diverse disciplinary interests.

A primary conclusion drawn by Olmstead is that the judgment pronounced in the parables trilogy falls on Israel and not merely its leaders. Olmstead is less than clear, however, as to the resultant relationship of Israel to the ἔθνος that Jesus says will produce kingdom fruits (21:43). At several points, Olmstead indicates that Israel is *reconstituted* to include the nations (e.g. "the extension of Israel's privilege to the nations"; p. 159). Olmstead highlights reconstitution as he explicates Matthean allusions to the Abraham narratives: "many from among the nations . . . will join Israel's faithful as Abraham's children" (p. 97). Nevertheless, Olmstead uses *replacement* language at other times to specify the relationship between Israel and the "new" ἔθνος (e.g. pp. 114–17, 158). "As a *nation*, Israel has ceased to be the people of God" (p. 162). No longer defined along ethnic but ethical lines, a "*trans-ethnic* community of believers . . . replace[s] the *nation* of Israel as subjects of the reign of God" (p. 117). Is Israel's unique identity extended or forfeited according to Matthew? Olmstead seems to express both alternatives, while apparently desiring to plot a course midway between the two (e.g. p. 162).

On a related note, Olmstead's analysis of the portrayal of the Jewish crowds could benefit from more attention to point of view as a narrative concept. Olmstead seems to hear the self-indictment of the people (λαόν) at 27:25 as the final word on their portrayal and fate. (For Olmstead, 28:11–15 only reaffirms the people's continued manipulation by the Jewish leaders; p. 64.) Although "his blood be upon us and our children" are the people's final words in Matthew, attention to point of view would ask about the *evangelist's* final word on the people. At 27:64 Matthew portrays the Jewish leadership as quite concerned the people (λαόν) will succumb to the "deception" of Jesus' resurrection. Matthew's final assessment of the people seems to be open-ended; rather than being firmly in the grasp of the Jewish leadership's manipulation, they are susceptible to the message of Jesus' resurrection (cf. Warren Carter, *Matthew and the Margins* [Maryknoll: Orbis, 2000] 528).

Olmstead's work addresses the issue of whether judgment in Matthew's trilogy of parables falls on Jewish leadership or Israel in general. Although scholars increasingly argue the former, Olmstead provides a textual argument that, while primarily targeted at the Jewish leadership, the judgment of the three parables extends to the nation of Israel. Those who argue the opposite will need to account for Olmstead's careful argumentation. In addition, by addressing the trilogy of parables with significant attention to narrative context, Olmstead has furthered much needed work on understanding how Matthean parables function within the evangelist's story and message.

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*Acts*. By Beverly Roberts Gaventa. ANTC. Nashville: Abingdon, 2003. 370 pp. \$28.00 paper.

Princeton Theological Seminary professor Beverly Roberts Gaventa has provided us with a commentary that meets the goals of the Abingdon New Testament Commentaries series: "to exemplify the tasks and procedures of careful, critical biblical exegesis" (p. 15). Gaventa's approach to Acts is fairly distinctive, both for what it chooses to focus on—the literary narrative of the divine actions in Acts—and what it has decided consistently not to deal with: historical questions.

In the introduction Gaventa uses the imagery of a "Journey" to describe the experience of reading Acts, and she then makes the case for and explains this approach (pp. 25–59). She presents the theology of Acts via a description of the book's divine and human characters, who are "beyond and within the journey." She discusses the "locations for the Journey," that is, the contexts in which Acts needs to be understood: historical (introductory matters); canonical (Acts as part of Christian Scripture); and ecclesial (today's church). Proposing a simplified literary structure—"a map for the Journey"—Gaventa sees Acts, after a prologue (Acts 1:1–2:47), organized around two key events: the conversion of Cornelius (10:1–11:18) and Paul's speech before Festus and Agrippa (26:1–26). With a preparation and denouement section for each, the book of Acts' main sections divide chapters 3 to 28 at 15:35/36. The author concludes her introduction with a statement about her commentary's literary-theological versus historical orientation. Citing Amos Wilder's observation that all stories "posit a scheme or order in the nowhere of the world" (p. 59), Gaventa identifies her concern to trace the order Luke posits on the chaotic and colorful realm of the world, "an order he refers to as 'the events that have been fulfilled among us' (Luke 1:1)." Since she is convinced that the scheme Luke posits in the "nowhere of the world" has everything to do with the God for whom nothing is impossible (Luke 1:37), she believes that, by tracing this scheme, she will be aiding Acts' readers to understand and accept Luke's invitation to "contemporary sisters and brothers of Theophilus to follow along in the great journey of the Way" (p. 59).

Within the general structure (prologue, parts one and two), the commentary deals with the organization of Acts on three further levels. The table of contents provides the detailed outline. For the major subunits (e.g. Acts 21:18–26:32) and minor subunits (e.g. 21:18–36), the author addresses literary structural issues. The third—the pericope level—engages in an exegetical analysis based on the NRSV but with constant attention to the Greek text (e.g. 21:18–26; 21:27–36). Longer pericopes may be further divided into literary units (e.g. the speech of 22:1–22 is commented on according to the sections 22:3–5, 6–11, 12–16, 17–21). Each minor subunit is followed by a theological-ethical section that deals with theological themes.

The commentary manifests strengths in all these areas. Gaventa demonstrates a practiced eye for detecting Luke's unified flow of thought across sections of his work,

which normally eludes straightforward analysis (e.g. p. 134 commenting on Acts 8:4–11:18). She deftly handles text-critical problems, offers helpful insights based on grammatical and literary features, and introduces important historical background information (e.g. pp. 103, 139, 193, 315, 334). In her theological-ethical observations, she consistently keeps the whole of Luke's writings in view so that sometimes the work seems more like a commentary on Luke-Acts than simply on Acts (e.g. pp. 156–57). The theme of the triune God on mission receives constant, yet textually grounded, attention (e.g. p. 162 on Acts 9:31–43; p. 261 on Acts 18:1–17; p. 348 on Acts 26:1–26). Gaventa's bibliographical control is solid, both in terms of ancient references and current literature on Acts.

A number of weaknesses, however, also surface in the commentary. The author's intentional decoupling of historical from literary and theological concerns, together with her consistent agreement with negative critical conclusions about Acts' historical reliability, prevents the reader from easily placing the narrative and its theological message in the real-time history of the first century. So, in the earthquake scene at Philippi, although "questions of verisimilitude are many . . . Luke addresses none of these questions" but presses on with his story (p. 240). By implication, the appropriation of the message of Acts for real-time history today is made problematic. The author's practice of critical methodology is very sensitive to what scholars have identified as rational discrepancies in the text. Often, she is content to take the critical consensus that a problem exists, or the disagreements among scholars, as an opportunity to be agnostic on an issue, instead of weighing the approaches and arguing through to a conclusion. So, the anomaly between judicial proceedings and mob action in the case of Stephen cannot be answered because of uncertainty concerning the Jewish leaders' prerogatives under Roman rule and the further uncertainty that Luke knew the legal situation in Jerusalem at this time (Acts 7:54–8:3; p. 131). Theologically, the author addresses interpretational matters in a way that consistently settles for ambiguity as the best way to understand Luke's handling of an issue. Whether assessing Luke's treatment of the Spirit's coming, the nature of salvation, or the significance of the gospel's rejection (pp. 174, 264–65, 98, 203–4), Gaventa stops short of attempting to sort out the ambiguities in order to articulate clear teaching from Acts.

This is a mid-level commentary like Dunn and Kee and stands in the critical tradition of Johnson, Fitzmyer, and Barrett. Its potential value and impact is in the literary and exegetical area. Its distinctive theological contribution is the consistent pursuit of the theme of God on mission. It provides its intended audience of theological students, pastors, and religious leaders with a good guide to Acts' literary structure, together with helpful grammatical and literary insights, historical background, and development of many theological themes. In matters of Acts' witness to first-century history and the book's theology, however, it will need to be supplemented with Bruce, Larkin, or Witherington.

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*Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities: The Shape, Extent and Background of Early Christian Mission.* By John P. Dickson. WUNT 2/159. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003. xiii + 413 pp., € 64.00 paper.

Comprehending the early church as a missionary movement is once again coming to the fore of academic discussion, as witnessed especially in Eckhard Schnabel's exhaustive and exceptional *Urchristliche Mission* (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 2002; now available in ET: *Early Christian Mission* [IVP, 2004]). Because some have made more

extravagant claims than the NT actually supports, John P. Dickson, an Anglican minister in Sydney, suggests a theory about how “evangelism” actually worked in the Pauline churches, and on top of that, he offers valuable insights on the meaning of specific terms in his *Mission-Commitment in Ancient Judaism and in the Pauline Communities*.

Dickson follows the Louis Feldman line (*Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993]) in arguing that Judaism did have an active mission. Paul’s mission, in fact, was rooted in how missionary activity was done by Jews among the Gentiles. This argument re-activates an older scholarship that, through the research of scholars like Martin Goodman (*Mission and Conversion* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1994]) and myself (*A Light Among the Gentiles* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992]), was thought to be overturned.

The gravity of Dickson’s study, however, is on Paul, and he makes the following claims about the missionary efforts of the earliest Pauline Christians: (1) Because the “gospel” is the eschatological declaration of salvation in Christ, the term is more appropriate for describing Paul’s own God-given task; (2) Paul had some “co-workers” or “partners” who labored with him in the mission of bringing the gospel to others; (3) it is historically inaccurate and biblical unjustified to think that there is anything such as a general mandate for Christians to be “evangelists” or “proclaimers of the gospel”; (4) there were appointed in each community those who had the gift of “evangelism” and whose task it was to evangelize; but (5) all Christians were to “support” missionary work and evangelism through financial assistance and through prayer; and (6) when the occasion arose these early Christians, whose lives were an ethical apologetic, were to witness to the saving presence of God in Christ.

In general, Dickson’s book is bibliographically aware, though there are some unfortunate omissions, including Gottfried Schille’s *Urchristliche Kollegialmission* (Zurich: Zwingli, 1967), which in some ways argues a similar case. It is too bad he has not made use of recent sociological studies, especially the consensus-shaping study of L. R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). Some of the points he makes would have been sharpened by these sociological studies, most notably by relating his understandings of various sorts of missionary activities to “kind” of conversion. In my judgment, the most noticeable omission is any serious engagement with Michael Green’s *Evangelism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970). It boggles the mind that he can dismiss this work in a footnote as a book from “popular church culture” (p. 4). I have to wonder if Dickson has seen Green’s study, for it is a front-ranking (and until Schnabel’s work was *the* front-ranking) study of missionary activity in the earliest churches.

The book is clear, and he is one of those dissertation writers who provides sufficient summaries that a professor can skim the book’s conclusions and then probe here and there to follow up points of interest. My agreements are many: it is likely that the argument that all Christians were expected to take up the task of evangelism is not with as much foundation as many would like; the definition of “gospel” is important and Dickson along with N. T. Wright is arguing that this term carries more freight and specificity than biblical scholarship often lets on; the role of “co-workers” and local churches in the task of evangelism and mission is complex and perhaps more organized than general swipes through the evidence permit; the role that supporting activities play in mission is important to recognize and, in fact, enables a church to grasp its larger mission more completely.

Where I would disagree begins with his foundation. Dickson does not provide any new evidence, and the evidence he has studied for missionary activity among Jews is material others have analyzed. He disagrees with what he calls the “minimalist” line, which is a pejorative for him and should not be. After all, those who are taking that line are not “minimizing” so much as they are arguing that this evidence does not

support the case that there was an active mission in Judaism or that Judaism was a missionary religion. I can agree with him that Goodman and I have, at times, showed the difficulties of seeing missionary efforts in certain texts, but I cannot agree with him that a more patient study of that evidence either overturns the older exegesis or supports the case that he is seeking to build. In fact, one might say fairly that Dickson offers a “maximalist” reading, because he intends to find what he can that supports a missionary presence in Judaism. What is noteworthy about this part of Dickson’s book is this: the evidence is infrequent; it does not come from central texts that shaped the identity of Judaism; and it is scattered across the centuries. Both Goodman and I have argued that there is in fact some evidence for missionary activities (and we trot out the same sort of evidence that Dickson brings forth), but where we differ is on the issue of what can be made of that evidence. Dickson decides to make as much of it as he can. We will counter him as we have others: show us evidence that Jews saw it as their mission to reach others with the Torah, and the only thing that really counts is behavior that indicates that they took such understandings to heart. The evidence is not sufficiently there to overturn the now rather common hypothesis (*pace* Feldman) that Judaism was not a missionary religion and that the early Christian impulse for mission did not come from Jewish *praxis* but from the Christian *pneuma*.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of Dickson’s dissertation is that he flip-flops when it comes to the evidence in the NT. Instead of “maximizing” the evidence of the Pauline letters, as perhaps P. T. O’Brien has done (*Gospel and Mission* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995]), he here resorts to minimizing the evidence of missionary activity on the part of the Christians of Pauline churches. Had he analyzed this evidence the way he did the Jewish evidence, he would have sought to explain how this evidence fits into an overall mission-commitment on the part of the Pauline churches. Instead, he thinks the evidence ought to be read otherwise: it is evidence not for missionary activity but for support of the missionary work. I am not persuaded, however, that Eph 6:15; 1 Cor 10:31–11:1; or Col 4:6 can be read in any other way than that Pauline Christians were expected to share their faith with others. Nor am I convinced that he has given sufficient attention to the tensions in the early churches that are now found recorded in Acts 1–15; there is a missionary impulse there, and it is connected to the Pauline mission.

Where we begin determines where we will end, and Dickson does not begin sufficiently with the power and presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer to follow up that “language game” in the direction it needs to take. What the Spirit provides is power and spontaneity so that God’s Word and work may be visibly manifested and spiritually effective. The missionary impulse of earliest Christianity is noticeable and distinctive; it did not get its start in Paul’s theology (or in Judaism) but at Pentecost when the promises given by Joel suddenly empowered a small group of Jewish believers, who found themselves, sometimes as a surprise to themselves, leading others to the gospel about Jesus Christ. That was the foundational paradigm of mission in the early church, and it is the paradigm to which any study of Pauline mission must be compared.

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*Apostle of the Crucified Lord: A Theological Introduction to Paul and His Letters.* By Michael J. Gorman. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, xii + 610 pp., \$39.00 paper.

Michael J. Gorman, Professor of New Testament and Early Church History and Dean of the Ecumenical Institute of Theology at St. Mary’s Seminary and University,

Baltimore, MD, has contributed previously to Pauline studies with a theologically astute volume, *Cruciformity: Paul's Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). That work stressed the trinitarian and cross-centered nature of Paul's spirituality and outlined its contemporary practical relevance. In the present volume, *Apostle of the Crucified Lord*, Gorman reflects these same theological emphases in a text that provides a general introduction to Paul and his letters and is designed for reading in conjunction with his letters. It is directed to two broad audiences: to those who desire to engage Paul and his letters because they believe that he and they have something to say to the contemporary Christian church and to those who are interested not only in the historical and literary aspects of Paul's letters but also in their theological content (p. x).

Gorman's treatment of Paul and his letters begins with six introductory chapters followed by thirteen successive chapters in which he surveys each of the thirteen letters of the traditional Pauline corpus. A brief epilogue rounds out the volume. There is a Scripture index, which also includes the apocryphal/deuterocanonical books. Gorman offers two distinctive features with respect to the book's format. The first is a series of reflective questions appended to each chapter, which are intended to encourage engagement at the personal or group level with the pastoral and theological challenge of Paul and his letters. Second, each of the chapters covering Paul's letters (chaps. 7–19) ends with a series of quotations from a wide range of ancient, medieval, and modern sources. The purpose of these quotations is to stimulate engagement with the reflective questions that follow.

In the six introductory chapters Gorman provides background and context for his later treatment of the Pauline letters. The initial chapter is wide ranging, treating Paul's Mediterranean culture, the Roman Empire, contemporary Judaism, pagan religions and philosophy, and the Roman city. In chapter 2 Gorman describes the objective of the Pauline mission as being "to create a vast network of multicultural communities obeying and glorifying the one true God of Israel by living lives of faith, hope, and love in Christ Jesus the Lord by the power of the Spirit" (p. 41). Chapter 3 provides an examination of Paul's letters, which Gorman describes as a surrogate for Paul himself "a communication designed to accomplish Paul's apostolic goals in absentia" (p. 75). Gorman next surveys the narrative character of Paul's gospel (chap. 4). Its master story concerns Jesus as crucified Messiah and living, exalted Lord, whose resurrection is also his vindication. It is "the announcement of good news with social and political dimensions as well as 'spiritual' or (narrowly construed) 'religious' ones" (p. 110). Gorman examines Paul's spirituality in chapter 5, suggesting that it is covenantal (in relation to God the Father, the God of Israel); cruciform (cross-centered); charismatic (Spirit-empowered); communal (lived out in the company of believers); countercultural (a contrast to the socio-political values of the pagan Hellenistic world); and new creational (resulting from God's reconciling the cosmos to himself). In chapter 6 Gorman outlines twelve fundamental convictions of Paul's theology.

Chapters 7–19 survey respectively each of the thirteen letters of the traditional Pauline corpus. Gorman holds that Paul is more or less directly responsible for eleven of the thirteen letters ("all but 1 Timothy and Titus," p. 91). Hence the organization of his treatment of the letters reflects his understanding of the order in which they were likely written: 1 Thessalonians (21 pp.); 2 Thessalonians (16 pp.); Galatians (44 pp.); 1 Corinthians (60 pp.); 2 Corinthians (51 pp.); Romans (75 pp.); Philippians (42 pp.); Philemon (17 pp.); Colossians (27 pp.); Ephesians (34 pp.); 2 Timothy (19 pp.); 1 Timothy (20 pp.); and Titus (9 pp.). With regard to the latter three (the Pastorals), Gorman maintains that "2 Timothy faithfully preserves the spirit, though not necessarily the letter; of the apostle Paul, while 1 Timothy and Titus preserve the letter, though not necessarily the spirit, of 2 Timothy" (p. 534; italics his). Gorman adopts a threefold approach in his

survey of the content and argument of Paul's letters. He examines (1) the story *behind* the letter (a sketch of the historical setting of the letter); (2) the story *within* the letter (a survey of the content of the letter); and (3) the story *in front of* the letter (selections of citations of ancient, medieval, and modern comments on the letter). Following the reflective questions and quotations of sources previously mentioned, each chapter closes with an annotated bibliography of general and technical works, though there are a number of conspicuous lacunae (e.g. no mention of Moo [NICNT, 1996] and Schreiner [BECNT, 1998] on Romans; O'Brien [WBC, 1982] on Colossians and Philemon; Marshall [ICC, 1999] on the Pastorals; and now too Hoehner on *Ephesians* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002]).

As the title of the volume implies, Gorman gives particular attention to the centrality of the cross in the structure of Paul's thinking and in his letters. He utilizes the term *cruciformity* ("cross-shaped") as a convenient metaphor of "not a onetime experience but an ongoing reality." This reality begins at the first moment of faith, is expressed in baptism, and continues throughout life. Believers both die and rise with Christ in baptism (Rom. 6:1–11); the paradox is that the new or "resurrection" life to which they rise is a life of ongoing "death—ongoing conformity to the death of Jesus" (p. 121). It is evident that Gorman intends this metaphor to be not simply suggestive but also corrective: "For many Christians, the death of Christ remains primarily a transaction between God and humanity in which Christ is a willing but largely passive figure. In such a scenario, Christ's cross does not define either his or our humanity. Christ's cross is seen as the *source* of our salvation, but not as the *shape* of it. For Paul, however, Christ's cross is both the source *and* the shape of our salvation" (p. 585; italics his).

Any work of this length and complexity will generally raise at least some questions to readers, and this one is no exception. Gorman at various points adopts doubtful interpretive positions (e.g. his suggestion that Paul's "choice" in Phil 1:22 may suggest that he was contemplating suicide; pp. 428–29). Many evangelical readers, moreover, will find his view of the scope of the authentic Pauline corpus unpersuasive. (In this regard, one wonders about the value and evidential accuracy of estimated percentages of where NT scholars stand with respect to the question of authorship of a debated book: e.g. "Perhaps 20 to 30 percent of New Testament scholars think that Paul actually wrote *Ephesians*" [p. 502]. See now Hoehner, *Ephesians* 6–20, on this issue.)

While there are some weaknesses with this volume, they must be viewed proportionately in the light of the work as a whole. In that respect, Gorman offers an impressive introduction to Paul and his letters, one that not only sets forth the historical, literary, and theological aspects of Paul's letters with remarkable clarity but also refreshingly challenges his readers to heed and appropriate Paul's theology of the cross.

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*Paul and the Jews*. By A. Andrew Das. Library of Pauline Studies. Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003, xvi + 238 pp., \$24.95 paper.

*Paul and the Jews* argues for a "newer perspective" on Paul, and it is a more accessible follow-up (shorter and less technical to the author's revised dissertation, *Paul, the Law, and the Covenant* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2001). Greater attention is focused in this volume on concerns related to anti-Semitism and the role of Israel in Paul's theology. The book deals largely with Galatians and Romans, although a few other Pauline texts are referenced (e.g. 1 Thess 2:14–16).

A brief introductory chapter surveys the problem (that Paul speaks both positively and negatively of Jews and the Law) and the history of its study (with special attention to E. P. Sanders and the “new perspective”). Das suggests a middle way, a “newer perspective,” which acknowledges both that Second Temple Judaism was non-legalistic (so the “new perspective”) and that Paul was opposing Jewish legalism (so traditional interpretation).

Chapters 2 and 3 focus respectively on the situations that occasioned Galatians and Romans. He concludes, as do many others, that Galatians is addressed to Gentile believers tempted by Jewish Christian missionaries to become fully Jewish, i.e. be circumcised and submit to Torah. Romans is addressed to a Gentile Christian audience, whose members differ internally over Torah observance following the disturbances and partial expulsion of Jews over faith in Christ in the mid-first century CE. Brief but fair summaries and critiques are given of more recent opposing positions (e.g. Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians* [Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002] on non-Christ-believing Jewish “influencers”).

Chapters 4 (Israel’s election) and 5 (Israel’s priority) look at the place of Israel in Paul’s writings, especially in Romans 9–11. The problematic “all Israel will be saved” (Rom 11:26) does not refer to (a) “all (ethnic) Israel” (two-covenant theory); (b) “all (spiritual) Israel” (church of Jews and Gentiles; supersessionist view); or (c) a remnant of ethnic Israel; but (d) a future mass turning of ethnic Israelites to Christ-faith (pp. 109–13). The seemingly anti-Jewish tirade in 1 Thess 2:14–16 is a piece of intra-Jewish polemic using an apocalyptic language of exaggeration (pp. 128–39).

Chapters 6 and 7 examine some of Paul’s statements on the Law, especially what Paul finds wrong with the Law (chap. 6) and the role it plays in Christian ethics (chap. 7). As to the former, Paul now realizes that the way of Torah was never salvific. With Christ’s coming Paul’s conception of divine grace has been radically transformed; the way of Torah can lead to nothing other than perfectionistic legalism. “In effect, the gracious elements of Judaism have been redefined in terms of grace centered on the person and work of Jesus Christ. That leaves the regulations of the Mosaic Law as a series of mere demands and obligations with no provision for failure” (p. 46; italics mine). Yet, as to the latter, this same Torah in the hands of the Spirit (i.e. “the law of the Spirit of life” [Rom 8:2]; cf. pp. 155–65) provides one element of God’s ongoing instruction for Christian ethics.

Concluding “Reflections” (pp. 187–96) suggest that Paul was neither a supersessionist (otherwise Hebrews, p. 192) nor an advocate of two saving covenants. Instead he held to a hope for physical Israel alongside a conviction that the gospel of Christ was the only saving message for both Jews and Gentiles.

As noted above, this volume seeks to map an interpretive framework for Pauline studies, a “newer perspective,” which acknowledges Sanders’s conclusions vis-à-vis Second Temple Judaism while still retaining the Reformation’s view of Paul as opposing self-righteous legalism. Along with “most NT scholars,” Das has “abandoned the view that a fundamentally petty legalism characterized the religion of first-century or rabbinic Judaism” (p. 8). This clearly differentiates Das from a traditional Reformation exegesis. Nevertheless, according to Das, in numerous passages Paul understands and opposes Judaism as legalistic. This sets him apart from the “new perspective,” which calls interpreters to abandon the Paul-versus-Jewish-legalism framework. Not wishing to assume that Paul simply misunderstood Judaism (so C. Montefiore and H. J. Schoeps) or was inconsistent (so H. Räisänen), Das has the post-Damascus-road Paul opposing what Judaism should hold to. While Jewish self-understanding was not legalistic, in the light of Christ Paul now sees that Jewish obedience can logically be nothing other than some type of legalistic perfectionism. This renewed quest for legalistic Judaism as Paul’s foil appears to be gaining ground among some NT scholars. See, for instance,

R. H. Gundry, "Grace, Works, and Staying Saved in Paul," *Bib* 66 (1985) 1–38; C. F. D. Moule, "Jesus, Judaism, and Paul," in *Tradition and Interpretation in the New Testament* (ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Otto Betz; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987); Stephen Westerholm, *Israel's Law and the Church's Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988); Timo Laato, *Paul and Judaism* (trans. T. McElwain; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); Friedrich Avemarie, *Tora und Leben* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1996); some (though by no means all) of the essays in *The Complexities of Second Temple Judaism*, vol. 1 of *Justification and Variegated Nomism* (ed. D. A. Carson, Peter T. O'Brien, and Mark A. Seifrid; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001); and Simon Gathercole, *Where is Boasting?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

Whether this "newer perspective" will prove persuasive to others remains to be seen. Not all will agree that "Paul hesitates to admit" in Gal 3:19–20 that "the Mosaic Law [is] God's Law" (p. 32). The crucial distinction between Christians "fulfilling the law" (Gal 6:2) and Jews "doing the law" (pp. 33, n. 46; 169; 172, n. 13) will appear specious to many (seemingly interchangeable on p. 182), as will the attempt to distinguish "blamelessness" terminology from that of "perfect law-keeping" (e.g. p. 147). Since other critical passages outside Galatians and Romans are considered in the book, one wonders why 1 Cor 7:19 ("obeying the commandments of God is everything" [NRSV]) makes no appearance. Although *Justification and Variegated Nomism* is claimed as important corroboration (p. 11, n. 22), the various essays actually stake out quite a range of opinions, not all of which support Das's thesis. Finally, since *Paul and the Jews* is predicated upon a supposed tension in Jewish sources between atoning mercy and strict obedience (pp. 12–13), one could wish to see interaction with my *Paul, Judaism, and Judgment According to Deeds* (SNTSMS 105; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), which argues that Paul and most Second Temple Jews saw no theological tension here at all.

Brief and clearly written, the book provides an even-handed introduction to current debates over Paul's theology, his Jewishness, and the interpretation of Galatians and Romans. In particular, it gives a lucid presentation of an approach to Paul which is both appreciative of some "new perspective" elements and highly critical of others. It will prove of value for students of Paul and his literature, whether pastors, seminarians, undergraduates, or informed lay-persons. Scholars will want to refer to the author's 2001 publication, noted at the beginning of this review. The select bibliography and three indices (modern authors, subjects, and ancient sources) make it user-friendly.

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*Romans*. By Grant R. Osborne. IVPNTC. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2004. 447 pp., \$23.00.

Grant Osborne's recent contribution in the IVP New Testament Commentary Series conveniently fills a hole in the spectrum of Romans commentaries currently available. It, like the series as a whole that Osborne edits, seeks to combine "a passion for faithful exegesis and a deep concern for the church" (p. 9). In comparison to other works that seek the same general balance, like those by John Stott (Bible Speaks Today series) and Douglas Moo (NIV Application Commentary), I would say Osborne's volume postures itself more in the scholarly-exegetical direction than in the practical-homiletical direction. In this respect, it may find a niche for pastors who want to be abreast of current scholarly opinion, yet need something more succinct than the "received" tomes in the

NICNT series (also by Moo) or BECNT series (by Thomas Schreiner). Perhaps more importantly, Osborne puts forth an Arminian approach to the divine sovereignty-human responsibility tensions in Romans, a stance not well represented in a field that has become increasingly dominated by commentators with Reformed leanings.

Osborne's comments are organized not in a verse-by-verse format, but in a paragraph-by-paragraph fashion, in accordance with the headings and subheadings of his analytical outline. While this may make it harder to find information on a given phrase of interest, it actually enhances the readability of the commentary; only information that unpacks the flow of Paul's argument is included.

Indeed, compactness may be the work's chief virtue. To streamline the discussion, Osborne tends to omit lengthy discussions on text-critical matters. For example, he skips over the famous subjunctive-indicative textual problem at Rom 5:1 ("let us have peace" vs. "we have peace"). Osborne also reduces "clutter" by moving extraneous material from his text to the footnotes. He believes *hilastērion* in Rom 3:25 should be translated "propitiation," but drops to the footnote consideration of C. H. Dodd's famous translation "expiation." This enables him to focus on expounding the view he personally holds, without getting bogged down with scholarly debate.

Where there are multiple options on a point of interpretation, Osborne is quite good at reducing the views into distinct one-sentence summaries. For good or for ill, the explanations he gives for his own choice are often just as brief. In one footnote, Osborne takes about ten sentences to give seven possible ways to explain the apparent "works righteousness" in Rom 2:7, 10 and to explain why he holds the seventh one—that Paul is speaking of Christians whose works do not *bring* salvation but result *from* salvation. It is masterful in its brevity. At other places, Osborne's writing style is a flurry of short-hand expressions that would be tortuous for a novice to follow. His discussion of the imputation of Adam's sin in Rom 5:12 and the five ways to interpret *eph' ho* probably should have been confined in its entirety to a footnote, where terms like "natural headship," "federal headship," and "mediate imputation" could be explained more fully and clearly. (The commentary attempts this in part, but I found the result awkward.)

Osborne's attempt to orient the reader to scholarly discussion is also pitched at a middle level. He dialogues with a number of the great commentators, but rarely with anyone prior to the twentieth century (except Godet and Calvin) or anyone whose work is not available in English. His citations are thorough, but there is no author, subject, or ancient literature index to enable more specialized digging. He shows an awareness of collateral scholarly discussions (e.g. aspect theory in Greek grammar, p. 174; the heterogeneity of first-century Judaism, p. 74), but cites such findings sparingly and only when they illuminate Romans, never for their own sake.

Osborne's only interaction with the "new perspective on Paul" is confined to footnotes where he disputes its view of "works of the law" (Rom 3:20), "observing the law" (Rom 3:28), "works" (Rom 4:4), and "own righteousness" (Rom 10:3). Contrary to James Dunn, Osborne believes these phrases refer not to Jewish ethnocentrism or the use of Jewish "boundary markers" to exclude Gentiles (circumcision, food laws, Sabbath); rather, they refer to the problem of the Jewish failure to achieve righteousness through legalistic effort. Osborne therefore affirms some truth to traditional Protestantism's rather negative portrait of the Judaism of Paul's day. The "new perspective," of course, has its problems, but I would imagine that readers with ties to the messianic Jewish movement, which celebrates the "Jewishness" of Christianity, might be disappointed the commentary does not break new ground and offer a more open and sympathetic position toward Judaism.

With respect to soteriology, Osborne's comments at times seems to favor the forensic side of salvation—God *declaring* sinners righteous—over against its effective side—God *making* sinners righteous (see his take on the "righteousness of God" in Rom 1:17).

Along these lines, he describes the death to sin in Rom 6:2 as a corporate “realm transfer” and the crucified “old self” in Rom 6:6 as a salvation-historical, rather than individual, concept. On the other hand, Osborne also devotes much space in his discussion of Romans 6 to the notion of inward transformation. He makes heavy use of “Holy War” imagery in expounding the Christian’s victory over sin (pp. 156–57, 163) and at one point likens the sin principle in Romans 6 to Satan (“While sin has lost its ability to overpower, it has not lost its ability to deceive,” p. 154). On the whole, I sense that Osborne’s approach to salvation in Romans is to affirm equally the *legal* fulfillment of the law’s requirements through Christ’s work on the cross and the *actual* fulfillment through obedience (so his comment on Rom 8:4).

Osborne’s Arminianism is evident in many places: his stress on predestination’s basis in foreknowledge (Rom 8:28–29); his belief in the role of human responsibility in divine election (Rom 9:11–13, 18). At some points he defends Arminianism with great vigor—he calls one comment by Schreiner “highly offensive to Arminians” (p. 277). However, on the whole, Osborne is refreshingly irenic in his tone, never dogmatic or argumentative. He frequently makes bridge-building comments like the one on Rom 8:13 (“if you live according to the flesh, you will die”): “whether one is a Calvinist . . . or an Arminian like myself, the warning is very real” (p. 203).

This moderation is also evident in his approach to the women in church leadership issue. Osborne’s openness is well known from his other publications, yet he is not heavy-handed in his treatment of passages of interest to egalitarians. He believes Phoebe in Rom 16:1 was an officeholder in the church but refrains from speculating about her duties or level of authority as a “deaconess” in the absence of further evidence. He believes Junia (without the final *s* in the TNIV) in Rom 16:7 was a female “apostle” but does not leap to conclusions about church policies about women’s ordination—he takes “apostle” to mean “missionary” as it does in 2 Cor 8:23 and Phil 2:25. In other words, to his credit, Osborne does not come across as opportunistic in his exegesis.

Some final words about the commentary’s other positions are in order. (1) Those with an interest in the theology of the Mosaic law will notice Osborne’s attempt at balance between Christ’s continuity and discontinuity with the law. On the one hand, he believes the Christian is *free* from the demands of the Mosaic law, because Christ brings the salvation-historical era of the law to an end (Rom 6:14; 10:4). On the other hand, he believes the Christian living the life of the Spirit actually *fulfills* the demands of the Mosaic law (Rom 2:13; 3:31; 8:4). (2) Those with an interest in Israel’s future will delight that Osborne believes a “national revival” is predicted for Israel in Rom 11:25–26. However, he stops short of discussing how this national salvation might express itself socially or geo-politically in connection with OT prophecy. (3) Those with a charismatic interest might be disappointed that Osborne does not embrace the notion of spiritual gift impartation at Rom 1:11 or speaking in tongues at Rom 8:26.

Finally, the commentary, in my mind, unfortunately offers little help to the preacher in finding contemporary application. There are, of course, devotional comments (“What a model Paul provides!” on Rom 1:9–15, p. 36) and a few personal illustrations (Osborne’s lack of healing from asthma, commenting on Rom 8:26–28, p. 217). However, there is not the thorough and constant engagement with the task of preaching the text from start to finish.

I say this with great heaviness because when I was a seminary student in Grant Osborne’s Synoptic Gospels course at Trinity, every lecture was devoted in its entirety to one question, “How do we preach this text?” He, more than any other professor, taught me the importance of making the word of God practical. So I set out looking for “preaching points” (similar in style to Craig Keener’s in his commentaries), where the exegetical information is packaged in homiletically-friendly declarations. I saw some of this at Rom 6:11–13, where Osborne presents Paul’s four steps to “becoming what

you already are” (p. 156–59), but I did not find much more. (This type of packaging, of course, always runs the risk of forcing biblical material into ill-fitting preconceived categories, but a good commentary, I believe, can acknowledge these risks and guide the reader through them.)

Further, in light of recent events, I thought Osborne could have offered more by way of application in one place: Rom 1:26–31, on homosexuality. This is an issue that simply will not go away, especially for readers in urban centers like myself. Osborne rightly refutes revisionist exegesis of this passage. However, he refrains from any discussion of how Christians can engage credibly in the gay marriage debate or minister effectively to gay people, apart from a brief word to “obey God’s command rather than the demands of political correctness” (p. 54). For a commentary series that seeks to “move from the text to its contemporary relevance and application” (p. 9), this omission can be disappointing, especially to pastors looking for wisdom and guidance on a difficult and pressing subject.

Despite these oversights, Osborne’s commentary is a welcome addition to evangelical Romans literature. It will probably do for the next generation of Bible students what F. F. Bruce’s TNTC commentary did for my generation. It is useful, trustworthy, and godly in its tone.

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*The Theology of Paul’s Letter to the Romans.* By Klaus Haacker. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, ix + 183 pp., \$20.00 paper.

This volume is not a commentary but an exploration of themes related to Romans. In chapter 1 Haacker deftly summarizes Paul’s major reasons for writing the letter, recognizing different reasons with different weights. He continues, summarizing the likely makeup of the Christian communities in Rome and their relationships with each other. Haacker also considers the nature of Romans and our reaction to it. Is Romans a letter, theology, or both? The central point of Paul’s theology is rightfully seen as the Damascus road encounter, which transformed Paul from a persecutor of Christians to a preacher of their doctrines. Haacker’s understanding of theology as holistic—inclusive of pastoral, social, political, and emotional dimensions—leads to his treatment of the rest of the book.

Haacker devotes an entire chapter (nine pages) to the introduction of the letter (1:1–7). He understands that these verses are a foretaste of the rest of the letter and “theology in a nutshell.” He views Romans as largely biblical theology: “a dialogue between the Old and the New Testaments” (p. 23), consisting of long, sophisticated arguments showing how the new Christian understandings fit with older Jewish understandings. As such, Romans is not only a theological treatise and an ambassadorial letter but also an explanation of God’s working with Israel in salvation-history through the person of Jesus Christ, the son of God in the Davidic line. Paul includes both the Jewishness of Jesus’ ministry and the universal call to obedience in vv. 5, 6. These two themes are developed at length later in the letter.

In chapter 3 Haacker summarizes the flow of Paul’s theological discussion in the body of the letter. He recognizes that Paul as God’s apostle was himself a novelty in the ancient world (p. 32), leading to the conclusion that Paul did not use ancient rhetorical techniques slavishly but rather in his own way. He does not explore controversial passages in depth, although he does discuss the “I” of Romans 7. Haacker handles the transitions from passage to passage, carefully tracing Paul’s movement from one idea to the next.

Haacker does not believe that there is one overarching theme of the letter (except that everything relates to the gospel) but that several ideas recur in the letter. These are explored in chapter 4 and are: Romans as a proclamation of peace; righteousness redefined; suffering and hope; and the mystery of Israel in the gospel age. This chapter is the longest, nearly one quarter of the entire book. Haacker subdivides each of these ideas and examines them. For example, in "righteousness redefined" he introduces the section by discussing the terms involved. He proceeds to describe Paul's problem: for the Jew, ethics were united with their ethnic identity, but for Paul keeping the law was what was important rather than ethnic identity. Haacker then relates how for Paul grace and faith were the basis of salvation rather than ethics. Next he discusses the proper place of ethics and wraps up this section with the role of *the* Law and the proper understanding of different meanings of "law." I highly recommend the section on the mystery of Israel. This chapter alone is worth the entire book.

In chapter 5 Haacker examines the sources of Romans, by which he means the particular OT texts, apocryphal material, and other Second Temple material that Paul probably used. Haacker briefly describes some of the rhetorical devices that Paul used in Romans and other material from the pagan culture that help us understand the message of the book and how Paul delivered it.

Chapter 6 examines several themes from Romans in terms of their impact on the original hearers and Paul's possible contextualization of his message for them. Specific examples include "peace," which would have had a great deal of meaning for Romans as they lived under the *pax Romana*, especially the peace of Nero. Haacker believes that Paul's emphasis on *dikai*-root words reflects Roman interest in righteousness and justice. He explores the role of law and the universality of sin in Roman society and how this may have influenced the way Paul presented his arguments.

In chapter 7 Haacker discusses Romans' relationship to the rest of the Pauline corpus and to the rest of the NT. Haacker's comments about the tension between Paul and James are helpful as are his comments about the relationship of Romans to Jesus' teachings in the Gospels. Chapter 8 briefly outlines historical approaches to the interpretation of Romans including those of Clement, Augustine, Luther, Wesley, and Barth.

In the last chapter Haacker examines the continuing relevance of Romans for Christian-Jewish relations and how the Reformation understanding of Romans should influence us today. Lastly, Haacker presents Romans' message of peace and justice as the true solution to today's worldwide political and economic unrest.

Haacker's approach to Romans is helpful. Rather than dwelling on obtuse details or detailed arguments, he concentrates on major themes and their implications. He draws helpful insights from background material that enables him to make balanced conclusions regarding controversial issues such as the background of *hilastērion*, although he does not usually discuss the controversies themselves. The necessary brevity of the work and of his treatment is the greatest weakness of the book.

What does Haacker think of the new perspective? Together with the Reformed interpretation he understands that Paul addresses the individual's need before God (pp. 60–63), but with the new perspective he rejects older understandings of Judaism as a religion without love and grace (pp. 66, 85–87). Haacker correctly recognizes that Paul is concerned with both corporate salvation history and the salvation of the individual. Rather late in the book Haacker specifically addresses the new perspective (p. 166). Finally, Haacker believes that Romans "contains messages that go far beyond what Paul wanted to tell the Romans at the moment of its composition." There is, therefore, an "abiding message of Romans for a disillusioned world."

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*Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul's Letter.* By Philip F. Esler. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2003, xii + 384 pp., \$29.00 paper.

Philip Esler, Professor of Biblical Criticism at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, has written extensively on social science as applied to NT studies, notably in his 1998 commentary on Galatians, to which he regularly refers. One need not agree with all his conclusions to recognize *Conflict and Identity in Romans* as a volume of singular importance. He provides an introduction and running commentary on the letter through the lens of social science, with particular emphasis on group identity and also leadership theory. He pulls in archaeology, epigraphy, and exegesis to help the modern reader to sense the message of the letter as first read aloud to a string of house churches in Rome.

The first four chapters lay the groundwork for the commentary proper, and here is where the work is its most revealing and most controversial. From the very beginning Esler stakes a large claim for social science, asserting that it is impossible to separate the question of God from that of social identity. The reader will be mostly struck, however, by the fact that he discusses ethnic identities in Rome without using the terms Jew, Gentile, or Christian. Following the lead of social science, he argues that *Ioudaios* really is a geographical term, denoting one from Judea who reveres Abraham as his or her mythical progenitor and is loyal to the temple. He prefers the term "Judean." At the same time, *ethnē* (Gentile, heathen) becomes "non-Judean," thus losing its pejorative sense. The third race is simply "followers of Christ" or some other such term, since "Christian" is rarely used in the NT.

Paul's role as a leader is to teach Judeans and non-Judeans that their true identity is as the people of Christ, and that this commitment, while not obliterating other categories, must supercede them. He reminds both groups that they live by the grace of God and thus are co-heirs of the promise though the one gospel, even as they maintain to some extent their ethnic identities. Paul may be termed with the social-scientific label "entrepreneur of identity" (p. 109).

Why was this so important in the first century? Esler is particularly valuable at this point, underscoring that every group was ethnocentric and therefore antipathetic to other groups. In the case of the Christ-movement of the eastern Mediterranean, believers were drawn from the two most antagonistic groups: Greeks and Judeans. In Rome, where the gospel was not yet making strong inroads among native Romans—note that Paul wrote to them in Greek—these two groups could be expected to be constantly at each other's throats. This was particularly exacerbated when they mingled in house churches and when they had competing ties to traditional practices (such as Sabbath, Romans 14). Given this, why did Paul write Romans? The two popular views today are that it was to unite the church at Rome or that it was to make them a base for Paul's mission to Spain. Esler likes both explanations: that only a unified church can provide such support. He also brings out issues of shame, honor, and slander, to show why Paul needed a good reputation in order to carry out his further work.

The book proceeds by chapters as Esler works out this approach. He is scrupulous about reading Romans in order, as that is how the mainly illiterate Roman believers would have first heard it. He accepts the view of Harry Gamble that chapter 16 was originally part of the letter and that it provides much useful information on the ethnic makeup of the house churches. Some outstanding points are: the difference between synagogues and house churches in Rome; group rivalry in the first century; Paul's method of making himself felt as a leader; and a long section on the meaning of living in *agapē*.

The bibliography is full of standard and recent exegetical tools, but also provides an extensive resource for exegetes who may be unfamiliar with social science. Esler, while

occasionally sharp in his refutations of others, demonstrates a healthy interaction with British and North American scholars from many fields. If he is too bold in some of his conclusions, he is to be admired for his optimism in understanding an ancient text. After all, "across the world today we see that communication is possible between people of different cultures, at least where those involved make an effort to understand. . . . There is no difference in principle when it comes to reading biblical texts" (p. 2). His style is lucid and gripping, and he shows a lively interest in applying the gospel to modern ethnic conflicts and in working out the issues of anti-Semitism that are alive today.

*Conflict and Identity in Romans* should be read as one more piece in a social-scientific analysis of that letter. The reader would do well to review Karl P. Donfried's *The Romans Debate* (2d ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991) or some of the recent works on Corinth in order to appreciate Esler's own insights. The work's lasting usefulness must of course be evaluated within the larger issue of the value of social science in exegesis. This is especially obvious with the theoretical constructs that are found in "Chapter 2: Explaining Social Identity." Esler must import a great deal of theoretical background before he turns to the text of Romans. He is influenced by works such as Fredrik Barth's *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969), in arguing that ethnic identity is socially constructed. While this helps us to avoid importing the anti-Semitism of the competing school of thought, "primordialism," into the first century, it tends to reduce Israel's nationhood to mythology. While this interpretation would have helped Paul's case, he did not suggest it. Still, one cannot read Esler without seeing many aspects of the epistle in an entirely new light, a light that very often comes from Paul's century rather than from our own.

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*1 Corinthians*. By David E. Garland. BECNT. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003, xxii + 870 pp., \$49.99.

David Garland's commentary on 1 Corinthians marks the fourth volume within the Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (BECNT) series, a relatively new commentary series that seeks "to provide, within the framework of informed evangelical thought, commentaries that blend scholarly depth with readability, exegetical detail with sensitivity to the whole, and attention to critical problems with theological awareness" (p. xi). The series seeks to target a wide audience, from NT scholars to the church laity, while also addressing the needs of pastors and others who preach the Scriptures. The aim of the series is not to examine every technical and exegetical detail within the text but rather to focus on those issues that contribute to the overall understanding of the text. Exegetical questions that do not contribute to the argument as a whole as well as a verse-by-verse approach are avoided in order to "stress the development of the argument and explicitly relate each passage to what precedes and follows it so as to identify its function in context as clearly as possible" (p. xi).

In order to highlight the flow of Paul's thought and key themes throughout the epistle, Garland organizes his commentary into exegetical units. Each exegetical unit begins with a summary that serves to introduce the reader to the next section within the outline, and then each subsequent subunit has its own summary. Within these summaries, Garland often refers to the chiasmic structure of the unit. The "Exegesis and Exposition" section begins with Garland's own English translation of the text and continues with his analysis of the text. The textual variants in the Greek text are marked

by half-brackets around the word or phrase. Garland briefly discusses some of the key textual variants at the end of the relevant exegetical unit in the section labeled "Additional Notes." Garland incorporates references from Scripture, Jewish writings, classical sources, and the Church fathers that illuminate the socio-cultural context of the relevant passage in question. As with the other commentaries within the BECNT series, Garland formats his commentary with his targeted audience in mind. For example, the appropriate verse or verses within the "Exegesis and Exposition" section appear in the margin, as do transliterations of all Greek words or phrases.

Although the introduction is surprisingly short (23 pages) for a commentary of this length, Garland nevertheless effectively provides a broad descriptive picture of Roman Corinth and how its distinctive position as a Roman colony affected daily life both within and outside the believing community. Garland attributes the Corinthian community's behavior and the issues that Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians to specific social relations and religious influences. First Corinthians, Garland contends, must be read against two backgrounds: (1) the background of Corinth as a city "imbued with Roman cultural values" (p. 3); and (2) against the background of Corinth as a mercantile society (p. 4). Within these backgrounds, Garland includes the dominant Roman cultural values of honor and social status that have infiltrated the church. In fact, Garland maintains that the majority, if not all, of the problems within the Corinthian church originated from the infiltration of these cultural values. Garland lists three primary theological issues that Paul addresses in his epistle: (1) Paul attempts to put an end to factionalism and feelings of superiority among the believing Corinthians; (2) Paul challenges the societal values of honor and shame that are antithetical to the wisdom of the cross; and (3) Paul corrects any misunderstandings the Corinthians have regarding eschatology. Except for the issue of the headdress in public worship (11:2-16), Garland avers that the cross and eschatology are central to every issue Paul addresses in 1 Corinthians.

Garland's bibliography lists some of the key sources for his readers (p. 777-823). One of the weaknesses of the bibliography, however, is that it is not annotated. The bibliographical citations are also not specific to their designated exegetical unit or type of work. Garland groups together reference works, commentaries, and articles and lists them alphabetically by author and date. If the reader turns to Garland's commentary for an introduction to the secondary material written on 1 Corinthians, then his bibliography is sufficient. However, any reader engaged in a serious exegetical study of 1 Corinthians would probably benefit more from the bibliographies contained in the commentaries by Witherington and Thiselton.

Garland successfully avoids getting bogged down with minor details and differing viewpoints among scholars. The scholars he appears to converse with more frequently include: Barrett, Collins, Conzelmann, Fee, Robertson and Plummer, Schrage, and Thiselton. Garland perhaps could have interacted more with the commentaries written by Witherington and Thiselton. Though Garland considers various aspects of Greco-Roman society in the introduction, he does not continue this discussion to any great extent throughout the commentary. By including summaries of Witherington's discussion of the Greco-Roman context of 1 Corinthians, Garland could have further elucidated his own exposition. Another possible weakness of Garland's commentary is the minimal notes he provides for the reader's consideration. While these factors make his commentary more accessible and less intimidating to pastors and the laity, they may exclude from its readership scholars and serious students of 1 Corinthians who need a thorough analysis of the text. At the same time, we must recognize that this is not the aim of the commentary series.

The Greek text does not play a central role within Garland's exposition, which is clearly demonstrated by his index of Greek words. The references to Greek that appear in his exegesis are predominately included in parentheses, but a brief definition of the

word is provided on an infrequent basis. Garland's commentary, therefore, does not require a firm grasp of the Greek language. Greek references seem to be included only when necessary. If the reader requires a discussion of the Greek text, then Thiselton's commentary should be consulted alongside Garland's commentary.

This commentary deserves commendation for treating 1 Corinthians in such a way as to make it accessible to pastors and others involved in studying this epistle. Garland avoids falling prey to cataloguing every minor exegetical issue and instead only addresses the main exegetical issues that add to an understanding of the epistle as a whole. This is a commentary that pastors and laity can turn to for years to come as a definitive source, but for those who desire a more technical analysis of 1 Corinthians Garland's commentary serves best as a supplement to the commentaries written by Fee and Thiselton.

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*II Corinthians*. By Frank J. Matera. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2003, xx + 332 pp., \$39.95.

Commentaries are often either excessive in length or insufficient in content. Frank Matera's 332-page commentary on 2 Corinthians is an exception. With a constant focus on how Paul's theological argument runs through the epistle, Matera steers through many insightful discussions of exegetical nuance without getting lost in the details.

Overall, the commentary provides a very helpful synthesis of the most recent scholarship on 2 Corinthians. Relying especially on Reimund Bieringer, Matera rejects the older partition theories and argues that 2 Corinthians is a carefully crafted unity. The background for the letter is two different crises, one that has been resolved and one that Paul hopes to resolve. The first crisis regards the painful visit (2:1) and the offender (7:12), and the second crisis regards the false apostles (11:13). In line with most recent interpreters, Matera does not identify the offender with the immoral person in 1 Cor 5:1–2. He is more likely someone who offended Paul during the painful visit. This painful visit is not Paul's first visit to Corinth but an intermediate one, which took place between the writing of 1 and 2 Corinthians and which is not mentioned in Acts.

Paul's account of his travels is interrupted at the climactic point where he was despairing over what news Titus would bring from Corinth (2:13). Leaving his audience in suspense as to the outcome, Paul elaborates on the integrity of his ministry (2:14–7:4), which is also a ministry of reconciliation (5:11–6:10), and he concludes with an appeal to the Corinthians to be reconciled with him (6:11–7:4). At this point he picks up the thread about Titus and reports how Titus brought the good news from Corinth (7:5–16). Now Paul has laid the groundwork, so that he can appeal to the Corinthians to continue the collection for the church in Jerusalem (chaps. 8–9) and he can deal directly with the pending crisis, the false apostles (chaps. 10–13), a problem that he has alluded to several times already (2:17; 3:1; 5:12). On the whole I think Matera has done an excellent job in distilling the best of recent scholarship and presented a good case for reading 2 Corinthians as a unity.

Since Matera is a Catholic scholar, it is interesting to note that he does not relate the judgment in 2 Cor 5:10 to either initial or final justification. Instead he takes it to refer to the recompense the justified will receive. In his interpretation of chapter 3, Matera follows several recent interpreters who have rejected the view that Paul intends a reference to the Sinai covenant when he mentions the killing function of the "letter" in 3:6. Instead, the "letter" denotes the law as externally written. With the new covenant,

however, the law is written on the hearts of the believers. They have been given the Spirit, who gives life and enables them to obey God's ordinances from their heart. Matera argues that if Paul had intended a reference to the Mosaic law, he would have written "the law kills, but the Spirit gives life." This argument is not very convincing, however, since Paul's terminology is explained as a play on words with the mention of letters of recommendation in 3:1.

Matera follows the many scholars who have argued convincingly that Paul's opponents are not some kind of legalists but rather charismatic preachers with a strong "take charge attitude." He takes the chief issues to be that they have intruded into his missionary field and advocated a ministry style that is not in accordance with the gospel. They have accepted financial support from the Corinthians, and Matera (following Peter Marshall and many others) understands this to mean that they have accepted the patronage of the Corinthians. This idea is not worked out very carefully, however. Sometimes Matera refers to the Corinthian church as the patron, sometimes the wealthy in the church, and sometimes factions in the church.

While he does refer to some of the major socio-rhetorical works on 2 Corinthians, Matera resists the trend to understand the letter exclusively in sociological terms. Amidst all these recent studies, it is refreshing to see how this commentary insists that Paul was an apostle preaching the gospel of Christ, not an orator teaching philosophy. Matera therefore avoids the trap of overdoing the parallels with other literature. He is aware of the differences that stem from Paul's self-understanding as a minister of Christ. Yet I wonder if Matera's focus on Paul as a theologian has led him to ignore some of the valid insights that have been gained from rhetorical criticism. For example, Matera does not mention that the Greco-Roman conventions for self-praise go a long way in explaining Paul's discourse in 2 Corinthians 10–13. When Paul apparently pays attention to these conventions, it is all the more interesting that he so boldly goes his own way when he insists on boasting in his weaknesses. Perhaps this lack of attention to Paul's social world is the reason why Matera takes Paul's trials list in 11:23–29 to be his serious attempt to outdo his opponents in providing evidence of the courage he has shown in his ministry. More and more scholars agree that Paul is here boasting in his humiliations and is actually engaging in a parody of the whole enterprise of boasting.

It may also be symptomatic of a less careful attention to rhetorical studies that Matera has a hard time making sense of 2 Cor 11:6, which is usually taken as Paul's concession of inferiority in rhetorical skill. Matera is aware that Paul is a very competent speaker, however, and he suggests the translation "I am not a professional speaker." The statement then reflects the difference between Paul and the opponents who accepted financial compensation for their oratory. Yet he provides no evidence that *idiōtēs*, which usually denotes a lay person, can take on this specific meaning. Paul's point has been explained better by Bruce Winter, who argues that the kind of oratory in which Paul concedes inferiority was the flamboyant kind of rhetoric associated with the sophists.

These problems notwithstanding, as a whole Matera has provided an excellent commentary. For a brief, updated overview of recent research on 2 Corinthians, with a focus on the theological argument of the letter, I know of no better work than this one. For chapters 10–13, it may profitably be supplemented by, for example, the relevant chapter in Bruce Winter's *Philo and Paul among the Sophists* (SNTSMS 96; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

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*No Longer Slaves: Galatians and African American Experience.* By Brad Ronnell Braxton. Colleagueville, MN: Liturgical, 2002, xiv + 142 pp., \$15.95 paper.

*No Longer Slaves* echoes the familiar paradox that some Americans whisper tongue in cheek: 140 years after the United States abolished slavery, African-Americans are not fully liberated from its legacy. The African-American dilemma, propagated by systemic prejudice as well as "self-inflicted" wounds, has resulted in a legacy of "transgenerational brokenness," bondage, and "an ambiguous existence" that prevent African-Americans from being "leading and contributing citizens on a large scale" (p. 4). Braxton addresses this malaise with a Christian "liberating African American hermeneutics," essentially, the interpretation of biblical materials with an African-American consciousness and an appeal to white Christianity for sensitivity and inclusion of Blacks. To move from African-American problem to biblical text and then to solution, Braxton employs a "reader-response theory" as an interpretative methodology. This "theory suggests that meaning does not reside solely" in the biblical text, "simply waiting to be discovered by means of the right intellectual tools. Meaning, rather, is a product that is created from the encounter between text and reader" (p. 30).

Couched in the language of the existential hermeneutics of Rudolf Bultmann and others, Braxton sees the text as having a plurality of meanings only realized when readers encounter and engage the Scripture in ways that benefit the community. Reader-response interpretation is a public activity, and biblical authority and inspiration lie not in an objective text but in its interpretation and usefulness in the community. As those in the community read "the Scriptures bequeathed to them by Christian history, God may speak fresh words of revelation. The Scriptures are not the word of God per se, but the Scriptures possess the potential to become the word of God as they are read faithfully" (p. 35). By implication, African-Americans do not hold a narrow, static view of the Bible and how it should function in their community. They accord Scripture its authority in their existential reading, hearing, and use.

What follows in Braxton's largest and most useful chapter is a scholarly, engaging exposition of the book of Galatians, especially as it relates to the problem of acceptance and unity in early Christianity, and, by extension, the African-American dilemma. Why Galatians? The epistle mirrors the theological, cultural, and ethnic tensions that existed in early Christianity among factions built around Paul, Apollos, Peter, James, and other personalities. The early church, which began with Jewish Christians, treated Gentiles with disdain and required them to follow Jewish customs. Paul, as an apostle to the Gentiles, also suffered discrimination at the hands of the "pillar apostles" and had to defend his own ministry and that of the Gentile witness on the basis of the unity of the faith. Peter and others who refused to eat with Gentiles but separated themselves from non-Jews when they were among Jewish brethren forgot that "Christ had nullified old ethnic stereotypes about the inherent uncleanness of Gentiles." Their hypocritical actions "symbolized a reintroduction of problematic understandings of social identity" (p. 76) and thus missed the essence of the gospel based on faith and love rather than ethnic notions.

According to Braxton, Paul and other church leaders solved the problem by advocating acceptance of ethnic distinction within Christian unity; the Galatians were Christian and Gentile, and the church should not attempt to make them Jewish Christians. Gentile Christian culture should be respected to the extent that Jewish Christian culture was. Jews did not have to give up circumcision or their dietary and cultural traditions (p. 74). By analogy, white American Christians must not only accept and respect African-American Christians as equals, but they must also accept and respect African-American culture and tradition on the same premise and not force Blacks to live like white Americans before they can be regarded as members of the family. Says Braxton,

“As Paul reminds the Gentiles and the Jews that the covenant promises were never meant to be the sole possession of the Jews, so too African Americans . . . must remind the American power structure that the ‘promises of America’ ought not be the sole possession of white people.” Christ has redeemed African-Americans from “the curse of being excluded from the promise of America simply by virtue of our blackness” (p. 90).

In *No Longer Slaves*, one finds an informed theologian at work using the critical tools of biblical interpretation with academic freshness and insight. Braxton’s understanding of the origin and nature of Scripture, inspiration, and biblical authority tours the line of the academic guild. His exposition of Galatians is also a rich source of material for entertaining preaching; by itself, the chapter is worth the price of the book. This is a provocative book; students of the Bible will find the chapter on Galatians refreshing and challenging. However, the connection between the earlier chapters and Braxton’s exegesis (chap. 3) is more obvious to the author than the reader; they read like a distraction to the study on Galatians. The view of biblical inspiration, authority, and revelation in Braxton’s academic reader response criticism is not African-American; rank and file Blacks hold a view of Scripture found in the average Protestant church, even evangelical Christianity, not the academy. Because of the colonial reading of the Bible in the oppression of Blacks, they do not trust the idea of readers granting the Bible its authority and inspiration—those are already given by God. So Braxton is speaking for and to his academic colleagues.

On another note, it is true that all is not well in modern black America. Yet what is it, and how do we correct it? If Braxton knows, his Christian-specific solution to the problem is simplistic at best. The idea of preaching good African-American-enlightened biblical sermons laced with Pauline theology to white Christians in the hope that they will become more accepting of Blacks and that suddenly the African-American problem will disappear is a dream only possible in someone’s church community. Few Americans will ever read *No Longer Slaves*, and those who do will find Braxton’s biblical solution to such a serious problem in black America an old hat that fits no one. He is asking the white community to accept us, Blacks, as equals in the unity of the “one church” founded on Christ, in which Paul says race is an irrelevant category. Yet Braxton wants the white community to respect Blacks’ ethnic identity and culture as distinct entities. How different is this from saying we need integration, but we also need to marry within our race to preserve it? What would prevent us from respecting Christians who have made white supremacy their cultural tradition?

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*Perspectives Old and New on Paul: The “Lutheran” Paul and His Critics.* By Stephen Westerholm. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, xix + 488 pp., \$35.00 paper.

Stephen Westerholm admits surprise in his preface that while perusing with a friend the latest books on Paul in a bookstore, of all people, Martin Luther strolled in. Not surprisingly, Westerholm immediately recognized him; the friend did not. Luther, noticing the books, asked about what was new with the study of Paul. The friend all-too-glibly volunteered several readable “takes” from the living giants. Of course, the friend could not restrain himself from pointing out that each of the modern authors has objected to Martin Luther and the shadow he cast over Pauline studies. Luther eventually had his fill and decided to go visit the “self-help” section. In Westerholm’s “whimsical” preface, “Luther” is a stand-in not for the strong-minded, vituperative Reformer but rather for the “Lutheran” interpreter who finds himself or herself overwhelmed in the last thirty

years by a “new perspective” on Paul. For those who are not certain that this perspective is on the right track, it will be heartening to find Stephen Westerholm at your side in the bookstore.

For many budding scholars in the late 1980s and 1990s, myself included, Westerholm’s *Israel’s Law and the Church’s Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988) with its “Lutheran” Paul—the foundation for the present work—was a breath of fresh air. E. P. Sanders had undressed older notions of a thoroughly legalistic Judaism as caricature. James D. G. Dunn and N. T. Wright had built on Sanders’s work in offering a revised understanding of the target of Paul’s criticisms: an ethnic Judaism that had mistakenly arrogated to itself a sort of supremacy in God’s saving plan to the detriment of Gentiles. Stephen Westerholm recognized that the pieces of the puzzle were not fitting together exactly as they should.

The revision painstakingly incorporates the almost overwhelming quantity of new writings on this subject that have appeared since 1988. He has also corrected deficiencies reviewers noted in the original book. For instance, his cursory review of Martin Luther as the precursor for twentieth-century work ignored the contributions of other key figures and, perhaps more tellingly, Luther’s important predecessor, Augustine. So Westerholm’s expanded overview in part 1 includes also Augustine, Calvin, Wesley, and a summary of the “Lutheran” Paul. Throughout the survey, Westerholm is targeting the synthesis at the end of the work; just one example: he carefully defines how each figure employed the term “law” (cf. the modern debate over Paul’s use of the term).

The preface rightly highlights that many think Luther saw in Paul’s relationship to first-century Judaism a mirror image of his own struggles with the sixteenth-century Catholic church (pp. xv, xvii; see also p. 117). The catalyst for the “new perspective” was therefore Sanders’s critical evaluation of the reigning consensus on first-century Judaism as it had been reconstructed under the influence of “Lutheran” readings of the apostle Paul. Surprisingly, Westerholm does not develop the “Lutheran” view of first-century Judaism as it manifests itself in Paul’s letters (note the absence of first-century Judaism as a factor in the discussion of the Reformers, p. 133). Westerholm grants that the conviction “most central” to the “new perspective” “pertains in the first place to Judaism, not Paul,” namely, that the Jews of Paul’s day were not legalists earning their way to heaven (p. 178; cf. pp. 250–52). If this is indeed fundamental to the “new perspective” readings as opposed to what came before as “Lutheran,” then scholars such as Thielman and myself, who do not see Paul combating legalism *per se*, and Bruce Longenecker, who recognizes a critique of Jewish presumption along with implications for legalism, may belong closer than our positions on opposite sides of the “Lutheran” divide would suggest. Any classification system will have its problems when working with such distinctive approaches to Paul. Westerholm justifiably opts for defining “Lutheran” positions by the ethnocentrism/works(-righteousness) axis.

Part 2 turns to “Twentieth-Century Responses to the ‘Lutheran’ Paul.” Westerholm bravely (and lucidly!) surveys twenty-five key thinkers and provides one of the most useful compendia of the century’s Pauline theorists, working with such difficult topics as the centrality or non-centrality of justification by faith, Paul’s robust conscience and Romans 7, the apostle’s understanding of Judaism, righteousness, his overall consistency or lack thereof, his anthropology, rhetoric, apocalyptic world view, the Law and its works, along with challenges to the “Lutheran” Paul and responses from “Lutheran” defenders. A brief evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of each approach, or even an accompanying key to the corresponding discussions in part 3, would have rendered the survey even more useful. A steady, comparative guide along the way would diminish the dizziness the reader experiences lurching from one scholarly position to another, a problem only *increased* by the necessary lengthening of this section to encompass more recent materials (cf. Mark Allan Powell’s helpful critiques of theorists in *Jesus as a Figure in History* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998]). Parts 1 and 2 nevertheless

provide the beginning student with a competent introduction to this area of Pauline studies.

Westerholm develops his own approach to the myriad of interpretive options in part 3. He begins with definitions. Ordinarily, "righteousness" (or "dikaiosness," as Westerholm prefers) is "what one ought to do and what one has if one has done it" (p. 272). Paul speaks extraordinarily of *sinners* being *made* "dikaios" *without works* by an interchange with Christ that takes place by faith (p. 278, drawing upon Morna Hooker, but not without caution on p. 364). Because of humanity's disobedience and the requirement of ordinary "dikaiosness," the "emergency measure" of the "dikaiosness" of faith is necessary (pp. 283–84). Note: righteousness does *not* mean "covenant faithfulness." Paul shows little concern for matters covenantal (pp. 286–96). Westerholm does not adequately explore the tension between the ordinary righteousness representing God's impartiality in Rom 2:6–10, 13 and the extraordinary righteousness of Rom 3:21–26 (n. 39 on pp. 277–78 is a start). As for defining "law" (*nomos*), while the term may be used for the OT Scriptures, ordinarily Paul employs it for the works required at Mt. Sinai (pp. 298–300). He extends his observations to include the Hebrew "Torah" (pp. 335–40). This sustained focus in Paul on the necessity of *doing* the Law poses a challenge for those, as Dunn, who think nationalistic boundary markers are especially in view. Paul's regular alternation between "works of the law" and "law" demonstrates that the phrasing is coterminous (pp. 314–19). Westerholm helpfully distinguishes "hard" and "soft" legalism and contends that Paul opposes both (pp. 332–33). Echoes of this distinction, though not explicitly raised, ring through Westerholm's next section evaluating Sanders's claim of grace in the rabbinic materials (pp. 341–51). The rabbis were not "legalistic" in the sense of viewing salvation as entirely apart from divine grace (hard legalism), but works do play a factor (soft legalism). Again, this raises the unresolved tension from passages such as Rom 2:6–10 that God will judge all people according to their works. Nothing in this passage suggests that Paul has excluded Christians from this universal axiom that supports God's impartiality as Judge. So is the same Paul who excluded soft legalism the author of Gal 6:7–9 and 1 Cor 3:8–15 (passages not discussed)?

Westerholm then reviews the motif of "justification by faith" in each of Paul's letters. Paul clearly defines faith as the means by which sinners may be declared righteous because of Christ in Galatians (pp. 366–84). The Thessalonian and Corinthian correspondence (pp. 353–61, 361–66) are compatible with the "Lutheran" Paul, even though they lack the explicit formulation of Galatians, Romans, or even Philippians. This "very old perspective" on Paul is nicely summarized in Ephesians, the Pastorals, and even James. Westerholm then outlines the role of the Law in Paul's thought. He includes in this section a rearticulation of the view for which he is well known: that Christians fulfill but are not under the Law. The Law no longer functions as a norm prescribing behavior for the Christian (pp. 434–35). Since this is a long-held position for Westerholm, it is surprising that he does not bring this thesis into interaction with the work of Peter Tomson, Brian Rosner, or Traugott Holtz (who are all absent from the bibliography). They have demonstrated that Paul regularly appeals to the Law as *a* norm for proper Christian behavior (n. 64 on p. 435 notwithstanding). Here too, the universal language of Romans 2 for God's judging all people according to the standard of the Law haunts Westerholm's conclusions. Years ago Dunn (*Jesus, Paul and the Law* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1990] 239–40) highlighted this issue for Westerholm. Yet does not that extraordinary interchange bring forth extraordinary results? Not only is Christ made sin for us, in him we are rendered righteous by faith, and this miraculous, saving faith exerts itself in works that will adorn us at the judgment and vindicate God as a righteous and impartial judge. Is not Rom 2:27–28 presaging the Spirit-empowered Christian in Rom 8:4 (after, of course, the transition of Rom 3:21–26)?

Minor caveats aside, this is an imposing work, from which even specialists will profit immeasurably. Is it coincidental that Westerholm, who cannot resist theses for Luther's thought or the "Lutheran" view of Paul, resorts to the same, historic device when he outlines nine theses (cf. the ninety-nine) for the role of the Law in Paul's thought? As Luther saw himself as a sixteenth-century Paul, does Westerholm view himself as a modern-day sort of Luther fighting a "new [perspective]" hierarchy? If so, may the hammer blows sound round the world.

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*James*. By Patrick J. Hartin. SacPag. Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 2003, xix + 319 pp., \$39.95.

Since the publication of Martin Dibelius's monumental work *Der Brief des Jakobus* and its translation into English in 1976, the letter of James has received considerable attention. In recent years Sophie Laws (1980), Peter Davids (1982), Michael Townsend (1994), and Luke Timothy Johnson (1995), among others, have contributed well-done commentaries on the letter. Interest in James extends beyond the letter itself. Scholars have expended considerable effort ferreting out the influence of the brother of the Lord during the crucial but obscure period of Church history that extends from the first Jewish war (AD 66–70) to the second (AD 135). John Painter's work, *Just James* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999), is an excellent example. Jewish Christianity, James himself, and his letter left tracks both on the orthodox Church and Gnosticism. The volume by Patrick Hartin in the *Sacra Pagina* series is a welcome addition to the study of the man and the letter.

Hartin teaches religious studies at Gonzaga University, a Jesuit institution in Spokane, Washington. His interest in James has extended over several years. Along with a number of scholarly articles on the letter, Hartin has published *A Spirituality of Perfection: Faith in Action in the Letter of James* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical, 1999). Hartin's commentary takes account of recent NT scholarship while reaching deep into documents from the early centuries of the church for additional insight. The volume will be useful for seminary students and advanced scholars, that is, for those who are acquainted with questions that arise from the Greek text and with the historical resources that have the potential to offer insights into the NT world.

After introducing the letter Hartin divides the text of James into literary units. He offers (1) a fairly literal translation of the Greek, incorporating inclusive language where possible; (2) notes on the text; (3) a series of seven excursuses ("To the Twelve Tribes in the Dispersion," "Faith and Works in James and Paul," etc.); and (4) an interpretation section where he expounds on issues brought up in the notes. Short bibliographies follow the excursuses and interpretation sections. There are no footnotes or endnotes as such.

The author sets himself the task of building on historical-critical studies of James. He believes that two relatively recent developments in NT studies can be applied with profit to the letter. First, through the application of sociological and anthropological methods, scholars have come to understand social forces reflected in NT documents. Second, through the examination of rhetorical styles that seeped from schools of professional orators into the psyche of the Greco-Roman world, Hartin offers insights into the literary structure of the letter. Incorporating these resources into his study, Hartin wants to allow the letter of James to speak for itself, as opposed to reading it against the backdrop of Pauline studies.

The imperatives of James, according to Hartin, are founded in a strong theological rather than a Christological approach (p. 5). Because James was immersed in biblical theology, he could not tolerate favoritism for the rich. God opts for the poor. The letter calls for social justice, not mere individual acts of charity. Other themes of the letter flow similarly from a theological stance. Hartin believes that Jas 4:4 is the central theme of the letter. Readers are offered the choice between friendship with the world or friendship with God.

While one applauds the desire to apply insights from sociological research or rhetorical analysis to NT documents, there are times when the payoff is uncertain. One comes away with no better understanding of the thoughts James wanted his words to convey. Once one has drunk deeply of ancient rhetoricians, it is tempting to impose the canons they offer too tightly upon a text. One wonders whether a clever student might not find Greco-Roman rhetorical structures in texts well removed from the influence of Greco-Roman teachers, perhaps in Jeremiah's Sermon on the Law. When Hartin and others debate which verse constitutes a *propositio* and where one divides the *rationis confirmatio* from the *exornatio*, the reader is left wondering how this effort has elucidated the text. If Dibelius is guilty of fragmenting the text of James excessively, Hartin is guilty of seeing logical, sensible developments too easily. Hartin (in company with other critics) would do well to justify his rhetorical analysis and to summarize what has been learned from its application that otherwise would have been unnoticed.

Sociological analysis of the NT text also comes to a point of diminishing returns. Hartin believes James assumes a relationship between God and believers on the order of Roman patrons with their clients (p. 142). Depending on how "client" is defined, would not any ancient people (or modern) think of themselves as clients of their gods? What proves too much proves too little. One might argue that God/worshiper is the proper paradigm for James's readers rather than patron/client. While an understanding of the patron/client relationship in Roman society offers insights for some passages in the NT, it is difficult to see its relevance for the words of James.

Hartin does not avoid issues where Catholic theology has found support in the text of James, though he treads gingerly at times. Both the sacrament of penance and the anointing of the sick (Extreme Unction) find their biblical support in James. Still, Hartin is fair in his assessment of the relevant passages. He is more uncertain when the question of the relationship of James to Jesus is the subject. Without attempting to analyze relevant texts, Hartin asserts that, when James is called brother of Jesus, it means only that he was of near kin. End of discussion.

There are times when one grows a bit tired of flowery language: "the golden thread that runs throughout the letter," "the pulsating heart of the letter." Assertions, at times, tend in the direction of tautology. Still, Hartin is a learned man. He knows the biblical text and the world that produced it well. He gives a good discussion to issues that arise from the text, brings relevant evidence to bear, and justifies his conclusions. Hartin has produced a commentary well worth having on one's shelf.

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*The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James.* By Luke L. Cheung. Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs. Carlisle: Paternoster, 2003, xv + 372 pp., \$24.99 paper.

*The Genre, Composition and Hermeneutics of James* comprises Cheung's revised doctoral thesis completed under the supervision of Richard Bauckham at the Univer-

sity of St. Andrews. From the outset of his investigation, Cheung asserts both that the letter of James must be read on its own terms, letting "James be James," and that it must not be "read in isolation from other documents of its time particularly relevant Jewish materials" (p. 1). With such critical focus, this study takes its place among a number of recent works that endeavor to treat James on its own terms (e.g. Richard Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage* [New York: Routledge, 1999]; Luke Timothy Johnson, *Brother of Jesus, Friend of God* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]). A tremendous strength of this work is Cheung's thorough investigation of the Jewish literary background of James, from which he argues for new and creative connections in light of these textual relationships.

The opening chapter ("The Quest for the Genre of James," pp. 5–52) first sets out a survey of previous attempts at identifying the genre of James, only to hone in on a consideration of whether James consists of Hellenistic or Jewish wisdom paraenesis. James is found to display characteristics of both, but in the end, Cheung identifies James as Jewish wisdom paraenesis which functions as a "counter-cultural" wisdom instruction, challenging the hearer's world view and reorienting him to the values acceptable to God.

Chapter 2 ("Compositional Analysis of James," pp. 53–85) turns from considering the genre of James to its compositional makeup. Here Cheung takes on the thorny issue of James's structure, both offering valuable critiques and insights into previous attempts at structuring James and suggesting his own creative organization of the letter. In constructing his own compositional structure of James, Cheung opts for a variation of discourse analysis, one that considers a discourse on the textual-linguistic level only. He signals the importance of both form and content and prefers what he calls "the formal-semantic-syntactical-thematic to the rhetorical delimitation" of the text (p. 58). His outline of James consists of prescript (1:1), prologue (1:2–27), main body (2:1–5:11), and epilogue (5:12–20). And within this overarching structure he argues for the importance of three connecting sections (2:8–13; 3:13–18; 4:11–12), each of which performs a hinge-like function, concluding the preceding material and introducing subsequent themes. Furthermore, the three connecting sections correspond to and support the two major themes introduced in chapter 1, namely the Shema (introduced in the sub-unit, 1:2–18) and the law of liberty (introduced in the sub-unit, 1:19–27).

Cheung's third chapter ("The Centrality of Word/Law and Wisdom to the Hermeneutics in James," pp. 86–161) forwards the original thesis that the "word," the "law," and "wisdom" are all interconnected, forming the hermeneutical key for the letter. In the first section of the chapter Cheung works to connect the "word/law" complex and to relate it to the overarching hermeneutical ordering device of the love commandment (Lev 19:18c = Jas 2:8). He argues that James is using the love command as the hermeneutical principle in understanding the Torah, comparable to its use in Matthew. Wisdom, a gift from God, is involved in the *how* of the important hermeneutical task of applying and keeping the law in one's particular situation. It also manifests itself in one's keeping of the law. Here Cheung's work, demonstrating that the "implanted word" must be understood upon the backdrop of Jewish literature and theology, is to be preferred over Jackson-McCabe's Greco-Roman background of Stoicism (*Logos and Law in the Letter of James* [Leiden: Brill, 2001]).

Chapter 4 ("Perfection, Doubleness and their Relationship to Word/Law and Wisdom," pp. 162–239) explores the relationship between what Cheung believes is the central theme of James, perfection, and the key themes of "word," "law," and "wisdom." Again demonstrating great care to trace the development of ideas through Jewish tradition, Cheung analyzes and forwards the call to perfection as the thematic center of James. He identifies the importance of the call to perfection in James and contrasts the emphasis on wholeness or perfection with the predicament of doubleness. Finally he sets the antithesis of perfection/doubleness in relation to law and wisdom in the context

of early Jewish and Christian thought. This is one of the key arguments in the work. It is surprising that there has been a general neglect of the theme of perfection in James especially within English-speaking scholarship. Only recently has this theme received the attention it deserves (see the work of Bauckham, but also Patrick J. Hartin's *A Spirituality of Perfection* [Collegeville: Liturgical, 1999]). Cheung provides the clearest and most complete discussion of the call to perfection in James, and he is certainly correct to address this gap in scholarship. He concludes that by adhering to the implanted word, doing what this word/law requires, Christians will be on the way to perfection and to life/salvation.

In his final substantive chapter ("The Eschatological Existence of the Messianic People of God," pp. 240–71), Cheung forwards the argument that the exhortation to perfection within the context of the "word/law" and "wisdom" complex cannot be understood apart from the letter's address to the "twelve tribes of the diaspora." The fact that the addressees are identified both as part of the twelve tribe entity of Israel and with the "poor" reveals their eschatological identity.

Cheung's conclusion that James is a wisdom instruction which adapts the teaching of Jesus to make it relevant to his readers is apt. In addition, his discussion of the call to perfection in James and its relationship to Torah and wisdom from above is valuable and clear. Furthermore, his original argument that the dual love command functions as a hermeneutical key for James's (as Jesus's) understanding of Torah not only focuses the letter's seemingly random exhortations but also elucidates the letter's specifically Jewish-Christian character. The only weakness of the study is his section on compositional structure, where he places too much emphasis upon the function of 2:8–13; 3:13–18; 4:11–12 as connecting passages that forward the themes of the Shema and the law of liberty. Such claims always run the risk of imposing rather than identifying structure within the text. Cheung's book will be required reading for anyone interested in understanding the letter of James and the current renaissance this long-neglected letter is enjoying.

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*Revelation*. By Ben Witherington III. New Cambridge Bible Commentary. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. vii + 307 pp., \$55.00.

Witherington's *Revelation*, the introductory volume in the New Cambridge Bible Commentary (NCBC) series, serves as an exemplary first step for a promising series—honest and thorough exegesis, helpful insights from the historical-cultural context, relevant discussions of special topics, and substantive pastoral application, all presented in a clear, winsome manner. This is a socio-rhetorical commentary intended for a "wide audience—including pastors, scholars, teachers, seminarians, and interested laypeople." Readers will not be disappointed as they feast on yet another significant contribution from this leading NT scholar.

Witherington opens the 50-page introduction by treating the usual matters of authorship, date, and audience. Regarding authorship, he concludes that the "internal evidence strongly favors the conclusion that the person who wrote Revelation did not also write the Fourth Gospel or the Epistles. . . . John the Seer is a prophet from the Johannine community operating at a time when there is apparently no apostolic presence left in the community" (p. 3). Regarding date, Witherington prefers a time of writing during the reign of Domitian rather than the reign of Nero. In disagreement with

Thompson, Witherington believes that John is dealing with a situation of real religious and social trauma for himself and his readers: "We cannot say that we have no evidence of a systematic persecution of Christians by Roman officials in this period because we do have clear evidence of suffering, oppression, repression, suppression, and occasional martyrdom" (p. 8).

Witherington takes advantage of his expertise in applying rhetorical scholarship to the NT by offering a section on the "Resources, Rhetoric, and Restructuring of Revelation." Here he discusses the text of Revelation, John's use of the OT, the composition of the book (as a combination of actual visionary experiences, careful reflection, and literary composition), and the rhetoric and structure of Revelation. In terms of structure, he sides with Bauckham who sees both recapitulation and progression in the central section of Revelation 6–19. Witherington concludes: "Each series [of judgments] reaches the same end, but from starting-points progressively closer to the end" (p. 21).

The introduction continues with a brief but insightful look at the social setting of Revelation. Witherington highlights the powerful role of the emperor cult in Asia Minor (a more urbanized region than one might suspect) by commenting on the emperor's unquestionable presence through temples, statues, festivals, inscriptions, coins, and other symbols. The convergence of politics, religion, and economics in the imperial cult explains why Christians could expect stern reprisals for worshipping Jesus as Lord, an action viewed as unpatriotic.

Many readers will appreciate the theological emphasis in the next part of the introduction—"The Christology of Revelation." Witherington briefly surveys the various titles of Christ found in Revelation as a means of calling attention to "some of the highest Christology found in the New Testament" (p. 32). In a way consistent with the Fourth Gospel, Revelation redefines Jewish monotheism by clearly affirming the full humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ.

Witherington allocates generous space to a section on the genre of Revelation, where he also touches on Revelation's purpose, composition, and interpretation. He concludes that Revelation is apocalyptic literature that combines Jewish prophetic and wisdom traditions and operates in the context of Greco-Roman prophecy. Apocalyptic literature is "minority literature written in a somewhat coded way for persons enduring some sort of crisis" (p. 33). As the visions came to John's "Scripture-saturated mind" (p. 36), he may have transcribed them verbatim, but then he had to explain what he had seen. As John groped for analogies, he often used universal symbols to provide explanation. Although John utilizes universal symbols that are not literally descriptive, Witherington argues that one should not assume that they are not referring to historical reality. John's symbols are multivalent or flexible. John knows that Nero "does not exhaust the meaning of the beast, but he certainly exemplifies it" (p. 38). According to Witherington, the rhetorical purpose of this complex book is to give early Christians perspective and hope that while "evil is triumphing, God is still in heaven and all in due course will be right with the world" (p. 38). The introduction concludes with a "Brief Tour of Revelation" in which Witherington analyzes a few sample passages from the book as a foretaste of the commentary that follows.

The "Suggested-Reading" list that follows the introduction includes an annotated bibliography on different aspects of Revelation research, organized by type of publication. The list is intended to serve as point of entry for new serious students as well as a reference tool for all readers. When the reading list is combined with the use of footnotes rather than endnotes for citations, the NCBC series offers readers convenient access to reference information.

This inaugural volume on Revelation has many strengths and few weaknesses. For starters, the format is appealing to the reader. The commentary proper begins on p. 65 and runs through p. 285. Each section includes the biblical text (the NRSV translation

in bold print), the commentary itself that consists of a general overview followed by more detailed analysis, a “Closer-Look” segment that examines pertinent historical-cultural information, and a “Bridging-the-Horizons” feature where the message is applied to today. The Author Index, Extrabiblical Text Index, and Appendix on the millennium are also very helpful.

Witherington’s writing style is jargon-free, clear, and engaging—a defining characteristic of his work in general. He interacts with contemporary biblical scholarship on Revelation in an appropriate and helpful manner (e.g. Aune, Bauckham, Fiorenza, Keener, Koester, Mounce, Reddish, and others).

The excursuses (“Closer Look”—identified in the table of contents for ease of location) deal with topics of interest not always treated in other commentaries (e.g. “Fallen Angels in Early Judaism and Early Christianity,” and “666, Nero, and the Ancient Art of Gematria”). Witherington’s masterful use of extrabiblical material enables the reader to better grasp the meaning of Revelation (e.g. the symbol of Apollo as the locust and Domitian viewing himself as the incarnation of Apollo on p. 154, the 1 Enoch reference which speaks of horses walking up to their chests in human blood on p. 197).

Readers will discover in this work (and often in the “Bridging the Horizons” section) a generous measure of theological discernment and interpretive wisdom. Take for instance his insights regarding the seal judgments, his observations on the function of prayer in Revelation (both on p. 140), his balanced remarks on the nature of heaven (p. 204), or his comment that “mercy offered is not the same as mercy received” (p. 197) as a corrective to the notion that justice comes in the form of mercy (Reddish). On almost every page the reader is treated to theologically grounded, powerfully worded insights reminiscent of the work of John Stott (e.g. p. 192: “Both early Christians and Romans were identifying a historical person of the first century A.D. as a god upon the earth, and since Christians were monotheists, this was severely problematic”).

Witherington is not afraid to be pastoral in his comments. Rather than detracting from his first-rate scholarship, these devotional reflections model for younger scholars what it means for evangelical scholarship to serve the church (e.g. pp. 188, 198–99). By example, he views exegesis as culminating in rigorous life application (e.g. his critique of needs-based preaching on p. 124 or his comparison of American and Roman culture on p. 235). Witherington also does not shy away from confronting inadequate uses of Revelation promoted by those outside of NT scholarship (e.g. pp. 122, 143).

The weaknesses are few. Readers should not expect a comprehensive, verse-by-verse commentary. This volume truly is a socio-rhetorical/historical-cultural/literary work filled with theological and pastoral insights. Witherington’s work should be supplemented by more comprehensive exegetical treatments (e.g. works by Aune, Beale, and Osborne). The typos are few (e.g. pp. 118, 230, 235). The half-page Subject Index is virtually useless and should be expanded significantly in future volumes or eliminated altogether.

Overall, Ben Witherington’s *Revelation* is a superb inaugural volume in a much-anticipated series. He does a masterful job of enabling his target audience to make sense of the complex and challenging masterpiece known as Revelation. For that the Church should be extremely grateful.

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*Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew.* By Bart Ehrman. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, xv + 293 pp., \$30.00.

There is not likely a NT scholar in the United States who has not been asked about secret gospels, lost books of the Bible, and the *Da Vinci Code*. The novel has brought to the forefront questions that most Christians never think about. How did we get the sixty-six books in our Bible? Were there other books that did not “make the cut”? Are these books available for reading? The book under review, by professor Bart D. Ehrman, the Bowman and Gordon Gray Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (and, interestingly, a graduate of Wheaton College), answers many of those questions. The question for the review is, of course, does the work answer them accurately, fairly, and correctly?

The book, after an introduction, is divided into three sections: “Forgeries and Discoveries,” “Heresies and Orthodoxies,” and “Winners and Losers.” The first section of the book deals with the discovery, both ancient and modern, of works that claimed to be “Christian.” The most interesting chapter in this section presents Ehrman’s thoughts on the Secret Gospel of Mark. This work, discovered (or forged) by Morton Smith, has baffled scholars for years. Smith claimed to have found a section of an ancient work, photographed it, and presented his findings to other scholars. The problem came when other scholars wanted to see the actual document, not the photographs. Many have held that Smith forged this document as a high-tech joke on NT scholars. Others believe that this is an ancient document; a few even claim to have seen it. Ehrman marshals the evidence in this chapter and comes to a soft conclusion that Smith forged the document.

In the second section of the book Ehrman gives a brief overview of several early heresies. He spotlights the Ebionites, Marcionites, as well as several brands of Gnosticism. Ehrman hesitates to call these movements “heresies” because he feels that this is precisely the question that he is asking. Ehrman will argue that, because some of these works and movements came to be called heresies by the “proto-orthodox” movement, the books and doctrines held by these groups were not accepted into what finally became known as “orthodox Christianity.” While no one can argue against the existence of serious doctrinal disagreements in the early Church, it is Ehrman’s analysis as to why certain movements “won” that will be troublesome to evangelicals.

It is in the third section of the work, “Winners and Losers,” that Ehrman begins to bring the wide body of evidence to bear on some conclusions. This section will prove to be the most controversial section based on a number of points. First, Ehrman uses a historical overview of the work of Reimarus to argue that there are differences in the Gospel accounts that “cannot be reconciled” (p. 169). Ehrman seems to want to argue that, because “each Gospel writer has an agenda—a point of view he wants to get across, an understanding of Jesus that he wants his readers to share” (p. 170), the Gospels then must be seen as something other than historical documents. It seems that the least Ehrman could have done here was to mention, in addition to the work of Reimarus, Baur, and Bauer, the work of historians like A. N. Sherwin-White or Michael Grant who argue that simply because the documents were written with a particular theology in mind does not mean that they are necessarily untrustworthy.

A more significant problem comes as Ehrman attempts to show why certain books made it into the canon while others did not. Ehrman is determined to look at the problem of canonicity as a historian. As such, he is unwilling to speculate on what place, if any, a supreme being may have played in the process. When one takes away the providence of God as a factor influencing the process, one is left with such factors as political power, money, and personal attacks to answer the question as to why one book is canonical and another is not. Ehrman offers four major reasons for the victory of what he calls “proto-orthodoxy” (pp. 179–80): (1) The proto-orthodox claimed ancient roots for their

religion by clinging to the Scriptures of Judaism; (2) the proto-orthodox rejected the practices of much of contemporary Judaism; (3) the proto-orthodox stressed a church hierarchy; (4) the proto-orthodox were in constant communication with one another. While Ehrman would agree that there were other factors, he uses the last third of the book to argue that these four were the major criteria used for determining the canonical status of a book. Ehrman goes on to argue that the church of Rome had a great deal of power and money, which were used to influence the questions of orthodoxy in other churches.

If one has only an unguided history, complete with “accidents,” then I suppose that Ehrman makes a fair case. One could just as easily be reading the Gospel of Thomas as the Gospel of John this Sunday. However, once one admits the guiding process of a God who is in control of his written word, Ehrman’s analysis seems to lack a great deal.

This work has some very fine points. It is in many ways a fair assessment of the extra-canonical writings of the first four centuries, once the parameters of the question are determined not to involve any question of divine providence. Ehrman goes into the question of whether one should involve theological issues in a historical inquiry in a little more detail in the tapes of his class on this subject. The book would be worthwhile reading for an advanced class on canon, as well as a class on the written materials of the first four centuries of the Church, particularly when read alongside the actual documents. The documents that Ehrman mentions in *Lost Christianities* are available in a companion work, also done by Ehrman, called *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did Not Make It into the New Testament* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). While this book is interesting and informative from a historical standpoint, an evangelical student must be warned that to leave God out of the process of the collecting of his word is to skew the process very badly. For an introduction to questions of canon, a far better recommendation would be the now classic work by F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988). Following up Bruce’s analysis with Ehrman’s would make an interesting upper-level course.

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*Given For You: Reclaiming Calvin’s Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper.* By Keith A. Mathison. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2002, xvii + 370 pp., \$15.99.

This book takes up the subject of the Lord’s Supper, one of the (two) sacraments of the church. There are many mysteries to the Christian faith, this surely being one of them. Unfortunately, many readers of Keith Mathison’s study will be left shaking their heads, mystified or confused on issues historical and theological. What did John Calvin and the Calvinist tradition actually teach? Was there uniformity? More importantly, what does Scripture teach concerning the mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit in and with the Word and sacrament?

Particularly alarming in contemporary Reformed theology is the rapid and widespread advance of a reinvigorated sacramentalism in a slightly different cloak. (One example of this trend is found among the Auburn Federalists, a little known group but highly influential and representative of recent “Calvinistic” thinking.) Part One of *Given for You* lays out the author’s grasp of the historical context of Reformed teaching pertaining to the Eucharist, covering the span of time from Calvin all the way up to the present. The biblical material is the subject of Part Two in which Mathison highlights the shadowy nature of OT revelation and its fulfillment in the new covenant reality

of Christ's body and blood shed for the remission of sins. Part Three addresses other various issues of a theological and practical nature, including comparison of Calvinist doctrine on the Lord's Supper with that of other Christian traditions, the matter of frequency of observance, the use of wine (not grape juice), and paedocommunion. The closing appendix, "The Lord's Supper before the Reformation," provides a brief overview of Christian interpretation prior to the Protestant Reformation.

The hero in Mathison's account is the nineteenth-century German-American theologian John Nevin, with whom the great Princeton systematician Charles Hodge sparred. What we have in this book, then, is a reassessment of the controversy that ensued between Nevin and Hodge. How important is this particular doctrine, one of many mysteries of the Christian faith? In Nevin's estimate, it is of paramount importance. It involves "more than a change in a peripheral doctrine" (p. 140); rather, it is "a central element of the Christian faith" (p. 141).

The testimony of history suggests that there was not unanimity within the Reformed tradition on the nature and significance of the sacraments, whether one considers the Lord's Supper or baptism. Reformed thinking has never fully jelled on this subject. What we do find, however, are a variety of formulations and explanations of the "working" of the sacraments, some views standing in tension with others. It is essential that great care and distinction be given to the diversity of expression. There is need to sort through differences, some more subtle than others. Before critiquing Mathison's historical and theological assessment, I note several formative aspects of the discussion and debate among Reformed theologians by way of a summary of the author's treatment of the subject.

The chief reason for the diminution of Calvin's doctrine among the Reformed churches, Mathison contends, is the impact that Ulrich Zwingli's teaching has had, teaching that Mathison regards to be non-Reformed. To Zwingli is attributed the view that the Lord's Supper is but a "bare memorial," not a real means of grace (i.e. a spiritual feeding upon the body and blood of Christ). Furthermore, Calvin's view, Mathison tells his readers, is the *authentic* Reformed view. (Some historians of doctrine refute the common reading of Zwingli's sacramental theology. More study of Zwingli's thought is certainly demanded here.) In the judgment of Hodge, Calvin had it wrong (in part). Research in the history of doctrine also indicates that later Reformed theologians objected to views attributed to Calvin. It may fairly be asked: What precisely were the views of Calvin? Was Hodge himself guilty of misreading Calvin, as Mathison claims?

Our author points out in the opening section of his book that one of the critical facets of Calvin's doctrine relates to "the heavenly location of Christ's natural body" (p. 6). How, then, does Mathison understand this datum of special revelation? The answer to this question is crucial for our evaluation of Mathison's theology of the Lord's Supper. Is Christ's presence at the Supper physical, spiritual, or both (as Mathison later argues)? Following the clear, unambiguous statement of Calvin, Mathison's opening affirmation instructs his readers that the physical body of Christ is now in heaven, not on earth, not on the Table—not even "suprasubstantially" speaking, which suggests a change in the substance of the Supper (see below). Is Mathison consistent in his own affirmation of faith? What one can say is that Christ is present at the Table in the same manner that he is present with believers indwelt by the Spirit and united to Christ by faith.

Turning to attempts to reconcile differences between Martin Luther and Calvin on the physical presence of Christ in the sacrament, Mathison suggests that the failure to reach agreement at the Marburg conference did serve as an incentive to Calvin: Calvin "wanted to achieve what Luther and Zwingli had not been able to achieve—common ground among the different branches of the Reformation. Calvin seems to have deliberately sought to find a biblical middle ground between the Lutheran and Zwinglian positions. It would be a mistake, however, to say that Calvin's mediating position was

as close to Zwingli's view as it was to Luther's view. Calvin sympathized with Luther's position. He did not have the same enthusiasm for Zwingli's position" (p. 5).

Mathison wants to see a physical, not merely spiritual, presence of Christ in the Supper. Quoting Calvin on the doctrine of mystical union: "I do not restrict this union to the divine essence, but affirm that it belongs to the flesh and blood, inasmuch as it was not simply said, My Spirit, but, My flesh is meat indeed; nor was it simply said, My Divinity, but, My blood is drink indeed" (p. 18). This leads Mathison to reason: "We see that for Calvin, the Incarnation was crucial because Christ had to take upon himself human flesh in order to mediate divine life to us. According to Calvin, the flesh of Christ functions as something of a 'channel' or 'conduit' through which the divine life is poured into those who are in union with him. He is the true Vine, and we are the branches" (p. 21). And as further clarification of his understanding, Mathison explains: "The difference here is subtle, but important. Some were arguing that when Christ commanded his followers to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he was merely urging them to believe in him. According to this position, believing in Christ is all that is meant by 'eating his flesh and blood.' Calvin rejected this view, saying that eating is a result of faith, not faith itself. In other words, faith is the instrument by which we truly eat and partake of the body and blood of Christ" (pp. 30–31).

This brings us to the crux of the dispute, as Mathison sees it: Do we commend Nevin's doctrine or Hodge's? Nevin argues for an "objective" signification to sacramental feeding upon Christ in the bread and wine. The meal is "not simply suggestive, commemorative, or representational. . . . The invisible grace of the sacrament, according to the doctrine, is the substantial life of the Savior himself, particularly in his human nature" (pp. 142–43). Here is the essence of the matter: According to Nevin, "The modern view [represented by Hodge] rejects the older idea that unique grace is offered in the Supper that is not offered elsewhere. . . . The modern view rejects the older idea that there is an objective force in the sacrament of the Supper. In the new view, everything is subjective" (pp. 143–44). Conversely, in explaining Puritan theology as illustrative of Reformed teaching, J. I. Packer (rightly) indicates that "The typical Puritan view of the Lord's Supper was not a bare memorialism, as if eucharistic worship was a matter merely of recalling Christ's death without fellowship with him in the process. It was, to be sure, no part of the Puritan belief that the communicant receives in the Supper a unique grace which he could not otherwise have; the Puritans would all agree with the Scot, Robert Bruce, that 'we get no other thing in the Sacrament, than we get in the Word'. But there is a special exercise of faith proper to the Lord's Table, where Christ's supreme act of love is set before us with unique vividness in the sacramental sign; and from this should spring a specially close communion with the Father and the Son" (*A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life* [Wheaton: Crossway, 1990] 213). Clearly, we have an irreconcilable difference of opinion. Nevin's view, in my reading, is sacramentalist. Parenthetically, saving grace is not bestowed incrementally, which is to say that we do not receive Christ or his benefits in bits and pieces. We are united to Christ in his person and work as the incarnate Son of God; we are the beneficiaries of his complete saving work by means of the efficacious application of redemption by the Spirit of Christ.

"As far as Nevin is concerned," writes Mathison, "the modern Reformed view of the Eucharist is a complete abandonment of the substance of the sixteenth-century doctrine in favor of a rationalistic conception" (p. 146). The appropriate word here is "subjectivistic," not "rationalistic" (whether or not we agree with Nevin's assessment of the church's diverse understanding of this doctrine in its historical development). More to the point, however, it is Nevin's view that is rationalistic (i.e. speculative and unbiblical). After affirming Calvin's doctrine, Nevin eventually comes around in his book to offer an improvement upon Calvin's otherwise ambiguous teaching.

In my judgment, it is Hodge who upholds a position more in conformity to biblical and confessional teaching. Mathison notes the following salient points, by way of summation: "Hodge's review [of Nevin's book] is roughly divided into four main sections. In the first section, he explains that there are several reasons why determining the true Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the sixteenth century is difficult. The first problem is the mysteriousness of the subject itself. The second problem has to do with 'the fact, that almost all the Reformed confessions were framed for the express purpose of compromise.' The third problem is the ambiguity of the terminology involved, and the fourth problem is the difficulty of knowing where to look for the authoritative exhibition of the Reformed doctrine" (p. 149).

There are many other features and ramifications of this debate that merit our close attention. These include the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to the entire human race, the imputation of Christ's righteousness (the meritorious ground of the sinner's justification) to those chosen in Christ (namely, the elect), the nature and necessity of the incarnation and atonement of Christ, decretive election, the dual sanctions of redemptive covenant (blessing and curse), and the sacraments as a sealing ordinance. On these issues Nevin and Hodge were at odds.

Where does Mathison leave his readers? The thesis he would have us consider is this: "Because Calvin taught that Christ's body is made present in the sacrament by the working of the Holy Spirit, his view of Christ's sacramental presence has sometimes been referred to as a doctrine of 'spiritual presence.' Unfortunately, this term is often misunderstood to mean that only Christ's Spirit or divine nature is present in the sacrament. Calvin explicitly denied any such idea. The term *suprasubstantial* might avoid some of these misunderstandings because it communicates the idea that there is a real participation in the substance of Christ's body and blood, as Calvin taught, but that this participation occurs on a plane that transcends and parallels the plane in which the physical signs exist. It communicates Calvin's focus on the presence of Christ in the sacrament, not the presence of Christ in the substance of the elements" (pp. 279–280). Despite terminological and conceptual differences, how does Mathison's doctrine of *suprasubstantiation*, in the final analysis, differ from Rome's doctrine of *transubstantiation*? I see little, if any, substantive difference between the two views. (It should be said, however, that Mathison forthrightly rejects Rome's doctrine of the mass as an ongoing re-sacrifice of Christ.)

The question I pose to Mathison and his readers is this: What does it mean to distinguish—but not separate—the sign from that which is signified in the sacrament (the latter being the spiritual reality of feeding upon Christ by means of the sovereign, gracious operation of the Holy Spirit)? If one insists on a literal, one-for-one union between sign and reality, then one inevitably ends up with sacramentalism. For Calvin, it is the sovereign Holy Spirit who makes effectual our spiritual feeding upon Christ in the Supper. It is the Spirit, not the sacrament, who unites us to Christ by grace through faith.

Before concluding this review, I want to return to the idea that there is "nothing new" in the Supper that is not already available to the believer in union with Christ. What more could we possibly receive that we have not already received in regeneration and union with Christ (a union which brings to us *all* the benefits of Christ's atoning death)? Rather than stating it in the negative, I want to insist that our participation in the Lord's Supper is a genuine means of grace for those united to Christ and, ultimately, a means of destruction for those who partake in unbelief. Participation in the Supper has individual and corporate, i.e. ecclesial, blessing and benefit. The symbolism of the Supper, that is both a memorial and an eschatological meal, is exceedingly rich in Scripture. To be sure, our understanding of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper (and our understanding of divine truth in its totality and particularity as revealed by God to finite

creatures) is fraught with mystery; our spiritual participation in and enjoyment of this sacramental token—received by faith—is itself a sublime, mysterious experience. Doubtless, some Reformed interpreters need to say more than they have in their formulation of the doctrine of the sacraments; others have said too much, going beyond the explicit teaching of Scripture. I believe that Mathison has transgressed this sacred boundary.

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*Reading Karl Barth: New Directions for North American Theology.* By Kurt Anders Richardson. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004, 246 pp., \$21.99 paper.

While it may seem presumptuous for a first theology book to engage the likes of Karl Barth, it is also the case that dialoging with theologians of the stature of Barth effectively launches one into the center of the theological conversation. In this book, Richardson successfully brings over twenty years of reading Karl Barth to bear not only on interpreting Barth, but also on various aspects of the contemporary discussion. Hence, readers are both treated to illuminating discussions on the doctrines of revelation, of God in Christ, and of reconciliation in Barth's *Church Dogmatics (CD)*, and introduced (with commentary and critical analysis) to some of Barth's more important recent interpreters: Graham Ward's work on Barth, Derrida, and deconstruction; Eberhard Jüngel on Barth's doctrine of God; George Hunsinger on Barth's doctrine of baptism; and John Webster on Barth, on Jüngel, and on Jüngel on Barth, among others. Throughout, however, Richardson appears to be interested in prosecuting two interrelated theses.

The first thesis has to do with Barth's understanding of baptism. Although this is not mentioned explicitly until the penultimate chapter of the volume, Richardson proposes early on an imaginative reading of Barth's *CD* from back to front, with the intention of re-engaging the earlier volumes from the perspective of the culminating volume (IV/4) and of identifying modifications and corrections of earlier positions by the later Barth. While this strategy allows the argument to drift in some sections, Richardson's critical engagement of the secondary literature on Barth keeps the reading interesting. The payoff comes in the chapter on the doctrine of reconciliation where Richardson sides with Jüngel against Webster and Hunsinger on three related points: (1) that by IV/4 Barth had abandoned the fairly traditional understanding of baptism and the sacraments enunciated in volume I of the *CD*; (2) that Barth had come to see Jesus Christ as the only true sacrament and means of grace; and (3) that Barth came to understand water baptism in ethical terms as an obediential sign of the salvific baptism of the Spirit.

The second and related thesis is that this view of baptism and sacramentality held by the later Barth is important precisely in light of the growth of Christianity worldwide in the last forty years among Baptist, evangelical, Pentecostal, and charismatic—i.e. non-sacramental—churches. Hence, Richardson commends Barth both as an ecumenical theologian whose change-of-mind can and should inspire fresh discussion among the churches on ecclesiology, sacraments, and liturgy, and as an evangelical theologian who deserves to be taken more seriously as a dialogue partner by those in the free church tradition. This last point, of course, calls attention to the mixed reception Barth has received among evangelical theologians. To reinforce his suggestion, Richardson presents Barth as a "pilgrim theologian" (exiled to Switzerland in 1935) who can speak not only to the quickly-shifting realities of global Christianity, but also to the immigrating and sojourning churches of North America.

The multiple layers of Richardson's book calls for various levels of response. At one level, Barth scholars can and will take issue with this or that aspect of Richardson's exegesis of the *CD*, even while there is also the question of his reading of Jüngel, Webster, et al. My own response is to Richardson's reading of Barth, especially with regard to Richardson's wishing to chart "new directions for North American theology" in general, and for evangelical theology in particular. As an Asian American evangelical, then, allow me to raise the following four sets of interrelated questions.

First, I wish to leverage Richardson's first thesis with regard to traditional evangelical theological concerns about Barth. If I understand Richardson correctly, his claim is that Barth's views of Jesus as the only true sacrament and of water baptism as an ethical rather than sacramental event provide bridges for dialogue with the non-sacramental notions of baptism prevalent in most evangelical theological circles. At one level, this seems true: evangelicals who are attracted to Barth's non-sacramental understanding of baptism will at the same time be introduced to his ecumenical and yet christocentric theology. At the same time, however, is not Barth's notion of Jesus as the only sacrament also what lies behind his understanding of revelation in general and of Scripture in particular? More specifically, Barth's commitment to Jesus Christ as the only mediator of grace also leads him to deny that Scripture in itself is the Word of God. If baptism as a humanly enacted rite does not mediate grace sacramentally, then neither are the words of the Bible as humanly authored inerrant or infallible on their own terms. Similar to how baptism witnesses to the work of God, so also does Scripture witness to the Word of God when proclaimed and illuminated by the power of the Spirit. If this is right, and if evangelicals are unwilling to compromise their doctrine of Scripture, how far can they proceed across this bridge erected by Richardson? Of course, for Barth, that Scripture is not inerrant does not mean that Scripture is full of errors. Rather, in contrast to traditional exponents of the doctrine of Scripture's inerrancy, Barth "could not agree that Scripture could be verified or experientially confirmed on universally agreeable foundations of truth" (p. 72). Still, given the prevalence of the doctrine of inerrancy in evangelicalism, is what is gained for evangelical theology in terms of Barth's anti-sacramental doctrine of baptism then lost in terms of Barth's anti-inerrant doctrine of Scripture?

Second, and building on the first, is Barth's well-known view regarding natural theology. Of course, Barth's *Nein!* to Brunner was related in part to his understanding of revelation as that which comes from God's self-initiative. As Richardson reminds us, Barth wanted to hear the gospel not on our terms but on its own terms. This is, of course, Barth's staunch commitment to "faith seeking understanding," which rejected any and all apologetic attempts that began with human reason or common human experience. At one level, there is much that especially Reformed evangelicals can appreciate about Barth's emphasis on divine initiative. On the other hand, does Barth's "no" to apologetics undercut the apologetic enterprise so prevalent in evangelical theology (even Van Tillian presuppositionalists rejected Barth on the basis of his doctrine of Scripture)? Further, does Barth's rejection of natural theology have any implications for evangelical missionary engagement with culture? Is there any room for the kind of contextualization advocated by evangelical missiology within a framework that emphasizes receiving from God on God's terms rather than on human terms? Sure, as Richardson points out, Barth himself acknowledged "the creation as the context for divine revelation" (p. 132). Further, in his discussion of Barth and anti-Semitism, Richardson notes Barth's insistence about Jesus taking on not just any "flesh" but specifically "Jewish flesh" (p. 219; cf. *CD IV/1.166*). However, these concessions to creation and culture seem to be ineffectual against the *Nein!* If Barth rejected any imposition of metaphysics onto Scripture because "Scripture demonstrates and generates its own" (p. 118), would not a committed Barthian then also say that Scripture generates its own world (cf. Frei and the Yale

School) including its own culture, science, and even its own history? Might this then also explain the tendencies of evangelicals who continue to resist engaging with the sciences, or who wish to identify themselves within the divine salvation history rather than engaging in political and liberation theological enterprises as common members of the world historical process?

Third, moving from missionary contextualization to missionary proclamation, how might Barth help evangelicals think through the relationship between divine grace and human responsibility? On the one hand, Barth's polemic against human rationalism extends to any role human freedom may play in the salvific work of God. In all cases, the divine freedom stands over and against human initiative. As Richardson points out, Barth rejects St. Augustine's mystical ascent and journey inward in part because this centralizes the self and its efforts rather than the gracious initiative of God (pp. 132–33). In typical Reformed perspective, even the act of faith in Christ “takes place as a result of the Holy Spirit making revelation as much as of a reality as the historical revelatory act of God in Christ” (p. 104). But if this is the case, of course, then does that lead to a *de facto* double-predestination with regard to the saved and the damned, the latter being “those who are rejected, are reprobate, and spurn the free, loving offer of God” (p. 170)? Curiously, Richardson does not say much about this aspect of Barth's theology, noting only that double-predestination does not apply in Barth's discussion of obdurate Israel (p. 218). How then does Barth resolve this tension in his doctrine of reconciliation? Many have thus seen the election of Jesus Christ as the answer to this dilemma: that humanity is elected in the “Yes” pronounced in and through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Of course, this leads to the universalism that was implicit in Barth's theology, which he acknowledged Christians can and should hope to be finally true. At the end of the day, is this speculative theological question best answered in the kind of evangelical Christian praxis that preaches as though all were condemned but believes as if *all* could finally be graciously caught up in the saving work of God through Christ by the Spirit?

The last set of questions specifically picks up on the kind of “pilgrim theology” advocated by Richardson for the North American context. In the third chapter of his book, Richardson outlines several features of the theology “on the way” of the Americas: as conversionist in focus (this supports, of course, Richardson's Baptist reading of Barth's doctrine of water baptism); as charismatic and yet ecumenical (these are not opposed but mutually informing, as Pentecostal scholars like Frank Macchia have argued); as fallibilist (given the fallen human condition, and the praxis-orientation of American culture); and as pluriform in faith (given the multicultural reality that is the Americas). We have time only to pursue matters related to the last two points.

Richardson suggests that the fallibilism that characterizes North American theology is consonant with Barth's insistence throughout the *CD* that there can be “no last word . . . no conclusion” (p. 52; e.g. *CD* II/1.250). In fact, theology itself must begin with repenting of our speaking of God, even renouncing our speech (p. 54). In this case, theology requires a constant “speaking again.” I suggest that there are both theological and methodological reasons for this repetition with a difference. Theologically, as Richardson points out in his attempt to read the *CD* from back-to-front, the doctrine of the Spirit arises to prominence in Barth's later theology. Barth himself suggested in an address given in 1957 that perhaps the way forward for Christian theology was to be reconceptualized within a pneumatological framework: “There is certainly a place for legitimate Christian thinking starting from below and moving up, from man who is taken hold of by God to God who takes hold of man. . . . one might well understand it as a theology of the third article. . . . Starting from below, as it were, with Christian man, it could and should have struggled its way upward to an authentic explication of the Christian faith” (Barth, *The Humanity of God* [John Knox, 1972] 24–25). From this perspective, Barth's

earlier convictions that Scripture “has a pneumatological agency of its own” (p. 101) and that the revelation knowledge of God is enabled “by the vivifying action of God’s Spirit” (p. 164) take on more robust pneumatological significance connected to the Spirit’s enabling the performance of the gospel (p. 167). In this case, theological affirmations need restating because they emerge from the newly present workings of the Spirit *in us* (not just God “apart from us” or “for us”). Of course, there is the recognition that “knowledge claims based in revelation and faith are a tremendous risk, but to describe them otherwise or to resort to philosophical self-substantiation, simply cannot be done” (p. 53). While this is true, I suggest that fallibilism in theology is not just a matter of being humble about our ignorance; rather, if we take the later work of Barth as a cue, it is pneumatologically justified.

Related to this is the pluriform nature of North American theology and, as Richardson also acknowledges, of the Christian Scriptures itself. From within the framework of Barth’s doctrine of reconciliation, however, I wonder if the “no” signifies only what is excluded and rejected, or does it also signify what is, in the end, redeemed in the “yes” of Jesus Christ? If the “no” is only to be discarded, then what is redeemed? But if the “no” is fully redeemed in Jesus Christ, then is not all of creation, nature, culture, and even human experience (Schleiermacher again!)—all of which is condemned because of sin—redeemed and hence now also a potential medium for the revelation of God? Richardson (and Barth) might respond that this depends on what is meant by “potential medium,” wishing to shy away from any sacramental understanding of creaturely realities. As an evangelical I would agree about this caution, but as an Asian American theologian, I have been moved by Kurt Richardson to think about whether or not Barth has much more to say about the diversity of North American theology in general and Asian American evangelical theology more particularly. In other words, does not the later Barth’s “pneumatological turn” signal a substantive enough shift and development such that even the earlier Barth is redeemed in a way that acknowledges the possibility of contributions to theology that arise out of diverse cultural, social, historical, and intellectual experiences and perspectives? If Richardson is right about this, then we have much to be grateful for his *Reading [of] Karl Barth*.

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*The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*. By Carl F. H. Henry. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003, xxii + 89 pp., \$12.

Carl Henry’s *Uneasy Conscience* is back, and not a moment too soon. Over fifty years after its debut, Eerdmans has reprinted the little volume just as evangelicals are reconsidering the prospects and limits of cultural and political engagement. The importance of this little book might escape the contemporary generation of American evangelicals. In 1947, the young theologian issued a jarring manifesto calling for a theologically informed and socio-politically engaged evangelical movement. Henry indicted conservative Protestantism with an isolationism rooted in an inadequate understanding of the Kingdom of God. He was right—then and now.

Henry’s cannons were aimed at two fronts—detached fundamentalism and social gospel liberalism. On the one hand, Protestant liberals, Henry insisted, had replaced the gospel of redemption through Christ with a political program. At the other extreme, however, Henry warned that fundamentalists had over-reacted to the social gospel. Conservatives had embraced a wholly future vision of the Kingdom of God, a wholly

otherworldly vision of salvation, and a wholly spiritual vision of the church. Fundamentalist isolation was, for Henry, not primarily a political issue but a theological one. By segregating social and political concerns from the gospel, the fundamentalist evacuation from the public square had conceded it to liberals such as Walter Rauschenbusch, Harry Emerson Fosdick, and their even more radical successors. For Henry, the problem could be located in fundamentalist confusion about the implications of the biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God.

In 1947, an evangelical consensus on the Kingdom—and its implications for the whole of life—seemed nearly impossible. After all, the evangelical coalition was agreed on the “fundamentals” of biblical inerrancy, substitutionary atonement, bodily resurrection, personal regeneration, and so forth. But the coalition was badly divided on the Kingdom itself between dispensationalists and covenant theologians. Remarkably, the past generation has seen evangelical theology coalesce around a consensus view of the Kingdom as “already and not yet”—with both dispensationalists and covenant theologians moving toward one another. (The Evangelical Theological Society [ETS] has contributed to this movement.) The Kingdom understandings that previously kept fundamentalists isolated have now been corrected by a more biblical portrait of the Kingdom and its relationship to the future reign of Christ, the present reality of the church, and the cosmic scope of salvation. This provides the basis for a renewed and biblically informed evangelical public theology. But the evangelical crisis today is quite different from the crisis of 1947.

There is a bit of irony, however, in Eerdmans publishing *Uneasy Conscience* with a foreword by Fuller Theological Seminary president Richard Mouw. In one sense, this is quite appropriate. After all, Mouw has done some masterful scholarly work on the nature of the Kingdom. His book, *When the Kings Come Marching In*, is a first-rate examination of the New Jerusalem and the new earth in the prophecy of Isaiah. Nonetheless, the divergence between the Fuller Seminary of Carl Henry and the Fuller Seminary of Richard Mouw is illustrative of the unraveling of the evangelical movement. Henry assumed that conservative Protestantism would remain united on the “fundamentals” such as biblical authority, which he saw as foundational to evangelical theological cohesion. Indeed, Henry laid the failure of liberalism precisely at its refusal to coalesce around a high view of scriptural authority. Political engagement without a solid revelatory basis, for Henry, was ridiculous. “Is it not incredible that some churchmen, whose critical views of the Bible rest on the premise that in ancient times the Spirit’s inspiration did not correct erroneous scientific concepts, should seriously espouse the theory that in modern times the Spirit provides denominational leaders with the details of a divine science of economies.” Henry envisioned something different for an evangelical movement. It was not to be a repudiation of the older fundamentalism, but a reform movement within it. Thus, Fuller Seminary was founded on a commitment to the inspiration and authority of an inerrant Scripture. Thus, ETS was formed around an explicit acknowledgement of biblical verbal inspiration and inerrancy.

Today’s evangelical movement, however, is quite different. Dispensationalists and covenant theologians agree on the primary details of the Kingdom of God. There are few arguments about whether the Sermon on the Mount applies to the church age, or whether the church is a “Plan B” in the purposes of God. But it is easier to find a creationist on the faculty of the University of California at Berkeley than it is to find an inerrantist on the faculty of Fuller Seminary. The Evangelical Theological Society might have a considerable amount of agreement on the inaugurated reign of Christ, but recent developments in the Society prove that evangelicals no longer agree about the basics of the doctrine of God.

*The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism* is, in some ways, the most important evangelical book of the twentieth century. Eerdmans should be hailed for bringing it back to a new generation of evangelicals. Henry’s critique is just as relevant now

as in 1947 and should be read by all those with a serious commitment to applying a Kingdom theology to every aspect of life. But, contemporary evangelicalism also needs to recover something we have lost along the way—a confessional conviction on matters of God, revelation, and authority. Otherwise, we may find ourselves relevant to contemporary crisis but with nothing left to say. After all, sometimes an uneasy conscience just is not enough.

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*With the Grain of the Universe: The Church's Witness and Natural Theology.* By Stanley Hauerwas. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2002, 249 pp., n.p.

Karl Barth as the Church's greatest modern natural theologian? Karl Barth and Thomas Aquinas shoulder to shoulder against modern attempts at natural theology apart from a full doctrine of God revealed in Jesus Christ? John Howard Yoder and John Paul II together as co-exemplars of the Church's cross-bearing witness to Christ and so standing "with the grain of the universe" of the Creator-Redeemer God? Is this but proof that Stanley Hauerwas is, as *Time* has said, "contemporary theology's foremost intellectual provocateur?" No, yes, and no.

That Hauerwas never thought he would be asked to give the Gifford Lectures is understandable, given the Gifford penchant for philosophers and philosophically-oriented scientists rather than theological ethicists. But also, given Lord Gifford's stipulation that the lectures pursue the question of the "All, the First and only Cause, the Sole Being" via (Newtonian) scientific methodology, Hauerwas's uncompromising christocentric, Trinitarian Christian faith would seem at odds with Gifford. Indeed, *With the Grain of the Universe* is in many respects the "anti-Gifford" Gifford Lectures, or better, the Gifford Lectureship that, at the "end of Christendom," holds a mirror to its long and prestigious history of philosophical-theological contribution and finds it wanting at its core—with at least one exception: the witness of Karl Barth.

Somewhat akin to Marx's "adjustment" of Hegel, Hauerwas adjusts the Gifford Lectures by moving to the central concerns of his lectures via critical analysis of three of the most well known and influential of the previous Gifford lecturers: William James, Reinhold Niebuhr, and Karl Barth as representatives, to show that the very premise of the Lectures is wrong-headed and contrary to the real "grain of the universe."

It is important to note that the title was taken from an article by Mennonite theologian and ethicist John Howard Yoder. He states that the strong are not as strong as they think, but the "people who bare crosses are working with the grain of the universe." One does not come to that belief mechanically, statistically, or militarily, but "... by sharing the life of those who sing about the Resurrection of the slain Lamb." If this universe is the good creation of the triune God, the God self-revealed in Jesus Christ, then a full doctrine of God, indeed a fully orthodox Christology, can be the only basis for faithfully recognizing what this creation declares about the living Creator Redeemer God. If so, then it is only "those who bear crosses," "witnesses," *the Church* as "witness" to its Savior, who can stand "with the grain of the universe."

William James may be the quintessential Gifford lecturer. From James's background in the sciences and philosophy (pragmatism), from struggles with the meaning of his own life and of humanity in general, Hauerwas shows that James attempted to save "scientifically" human significance in a world that the sciences had turned into one of vast impersonal chance. His pragmatism, Darwinism and "religious" humanism combined to transform natural theology from a way of thinking that moves from creation

toward God to “religious psychology” that attempts to uncover human significance within the “varieties of our human religious experience” (i.e. subjectivity). So, from James’s life and thought, and centrally from his Gifford Lectures, Hauerwas explains how James’s account of religious experience was a crucial element of his strategy to sustain human hope in a way sufficient to promote “the human endeavor.” Even today James’s humanism is exceedingly seductive, notably to those within religious traditions, for we recognize ourselves in his sympathetic portrayals of the “healthy minded.” But James’s religious quest for human worth in an impersonal universe not only turns God into something akin to Kant’s postulated God—in Kant’s terms “the (divine) condition of the possibility” of our significance—but is radically reductionistic; it must be resisted by those who would stand within historical Christian communities of faith. In fact, Hauerwas exposes James’s clear anti-Christian purpose in *Varieties* and his other works. As Emerson’s “theologian,” and so as theologian of the “new American religion of the human Spirit,” James regarded democracy as the emerging nature of the universe and, if so, Christianity was an impediment to his democratic faith.

Reinhold Niebuhr has been regarded as the “Christian” answer to William James. Yet the title of his Gifford Lectures, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*, makes clear the dubitability of such a claim. Again, Hauerwas sets Niebuhr’s Lectures in the context of his developing thought. Though often described as a representative of neo-orthodoxy, Niebuhr grew up as a liberal, heir of the Harnack-Troeltsch tradition. Hauerwas unpacks the formative connection between Niebuhr’s first serious theological work, “The Validity and Certainty of Religious Knowledge” (B.D. thesis, 1914), and his subsequent works—including *Nature and Destiny*. Thus, early on Niebuhr established his roots in James by arguing pragmatically that naturalism is inadequate in the face of the human religious need, and the demand for religion and religious truth is the demand for personality within an impersonal universe. Humanity cannot understand itself without the permanent moral order of a personal transcendent God; therefore, it needs a personal God in the moral struggles of human lives—moral struggles without meaning if there is no God. Pragmatically, humanity needs religion that, in turn, needs a transcendent God. But, as Hauerwas rightly points out, this is not the God of orthodoxy (neo- or otherwise). Niebuhr was very critical of Barth, rejected the designation “neo-orthodox,” and held consistently to the Jesus of modern historical criticism. He was linked to Barth only because he came to see (before his Gifford Lectures) the pervasiveness and radicality of human sinfulness and so the foolishness of liberal optimism about humanity. But throughout his life Niebuhr remained committed to theological liberalism, as formed by Jamesian pragmatism. In apparent contrast to James, though, Niebuhr remained an “apologist” for Christianity. Yet Hauerwas is right on the mark in claiming that here, too, Niebuhr was thoroughly Jamesian. The progression of Niebuhr’s thought was from human need to God, rather than from God to humanity. In this way, Christianity could be a resource for the spiritual regeneration of Western civilization. Niebuhr’s blend of James, Troeltsch, and Bergsonian personalism undergirded the liberal Christian tradition for the sake of Western culture and democracy. In contrast to James, then, Niebuhr made Christianity a trusted player in the liberal game of tolerance. But like James’s god, Niebuhr’s god appears to be no more than a human projection, at best a domesticated god, and as such falls prey to the critique of Feuerbach. As I heard Hauerwas once state, “Niebuhr was an atheist; he just didn’t know it.” His amalgamation of Troeltsch and especially James could neither convince the secularists nor sustain the lives of Christians. And, very important to Hauerwas’s argument, Niebuhr gave no significant account of the church. Thus, as Hauerwas again argues, Niebuhr is not the Christian alternative to James.

As a hero—not as *the* hero of Hauerwas’s argument—Karl Barth is the Christian alternative to the unsustainable attempt to make world- or human-centered natural

theology a subject analogous to the physical sciences apart from a full doctrine of God. As reflected in the subtitle, Karl Barth, as a thoroughly Christocentric, Trinitarian Christian, bore *witness* to the Creator-Redeemer God. In *CDI/1*, Barth stated that his purpose was to emphasize preaching, thus theology, and so Christian speech is first to last about God. Unlike James and Niebuhr, Barth sustained confident Christian speech, i.e. *witness*. Herein it is Hauerwas's concern to show that Barth, despite his "Nein" to Brunner's "point of contact," in his *Church Dogmatics* as an immense theological metaphysics, *does* provide the resources necessary for developing a theologically adequate natural theology; that Barth has made clear, like Aquinas in his *Summa*, that natural theology cannot be faithfully done apart from or "in front of" (*a priori*) a full doctrine of the triune God. As such, the real nature of natural theology is to be found in witnesses to the crucified and risen Christ. The *CD* is also a massive attempt to overturn the epistemological prejudices of modernity.

From first to last, then, Barth's *Dogmatics* was intended to make the reader a more adequate disciple and knower of God, and so a faithful *witness*. This results from the recognition that the truth that is Jesus Christ is not one truth among others but is "the universal truth of God, the *prima veritas*, which is also the *ultima veritas*," because in Jesus Christ God has created all things. Humanity, the cosmos, all that exists in him and for him, the Almighty Word. To know Christ is to know all. For Barth theology, natural or otherwise, is about God, the God disclosed decisively, historically, redemptively in Jesus, crucified and risen; it is not from human reason, religion, experience or the sciences. If we get our theology (God) wrong, we get the world wrong. In *CD* Barth sought to help his readers acquire skills necessary to see all that is *as it is*. For Barth, as true witness of the Creator-Redeemer God, God is the beginning, not the end of speech, the revealer, and so he who reveals and lays claim to humanity—who we are and what we must do. In the aftermath of Christendom and against the modernist, self-projecting, self-centered stream of theological liberalism, Karl Barth not only refused its "crumbs" but galvanized Christianity's historical resources to declare the fully visible Christian gospel, and so "do theology without reservation." That, says Hauerwas, is what Barth accomplished and sustained throughout the *CD* and in his life as witness. But further for Barth, participation as witness in grateful response to God's revelation cannot be intelligible apart from *the church*. According to Hauerwas, Barth's understanding of the possibility of our knowledge of God (which follows its actuality in Jesus Christ, i.e. non-abstract) must conclude by reckoning with his understanding of the moral life that the church makes possible. Yet Hauerwas finds that at just this critical point, Barth gave away too much to the "worldliness of the world" and so undercut too much of the church's call to active, forthright witness in the face of that very worldliness as rebellion against the living God. But as noted above, Barth, the faithful witness to the God who became incarnate in Jesus Christ, is *a hero, not the hero*, of Hauerwas's theological narrative.

So what is the hero? The church both *is* and *ought to be* Hauerwas's hero (to use a phrase Hauerwas uses many times) "to the extent" that it truthfully and faithfully *bears witness* to the one true and living God, and so lives "with the grain of the universe." Thus, it is in Hauerwas's multi-textured final lecture that he brings to clarity that it is the church, as and "to the extent" that it bears witness to Jesus Christ, that is central and properly natural to a truly natural theology. Only *that* God—the triune God of Christian speech, the God who is known as Jesus Christ—is also the Creator God evidenced in his creation. Hence, the life of Karl Barth, and more recently the lives of such apparently disparate Christians as Mennonite John Howard Yoder and Pope John Paul II (among others) bear faithful (and essentially pacifist) witness to the crucified and risen Christ. Through the whole of the lectures, but especially in the last, Hauerwas seems to make much narrative and methodological use of the late James William McClendon's "Biography as Theology" (cf. McClendon's *Systematic Theology*,

especially volume three, *Witness*). These lives, seemingly so different but unified in their christocentricity, testify to the truth of the God revealed in Jesus Christ and by the Spirit. "By *their* fruit shall we know (*His*) truthfulness." These lives, as representing the church (despite its prevalent faithlessness), are said to be not only working with, but apparently *reveal*, the grain of the universe—and so its Creator who gave his only begotten Son.

Hauerwas's Gifford Lectures are surely "against the grain" of most Giffords, but at the same time they are faithful to his corrected emphases, centered in Christ. If the Redeemer is also the Creator, if the second person of the triune Godhead, the eternal *Logos*, became incarnate as Jesus Christ, how could it possibly be otherwise? Thus, I am essentially in agreement with Hauerwas that natural theology cannot be truthfully, faith-fully done apart from a full doctrine of God. Again, if one does not get God right, one will not get the world (as it is) right. Thus, Hauerwas's formulation and presentation of Barth's theological, Christocentric priority—so that Barth's life and, above all, the church's witness are shown to be *natural* to this world as God's own—is both startling and effective. Hauerwas's narrative portrayals of James, and most notably Niebuhr and Barth, theo-biographically bring into bold relief an often unseen vision of twentieth-century theology—and in a way that allows Hauerwas to employ and embody his own commitment to narrative theology. And I must say that it is about time that Niebuhr's theological liberalism was shown for what it was. Many more accolades could be added.

While largely agreeing with "the grain" of Hauerwas's argument, I do have some concerns. First, what/which "church" is it that, by its witness, works with the grain of the universe? I think that the essence, distinctives, and central foci of a Yoder's Mennonite ecclesiology (believers' church) and those of John Paul II's Roman Catholic Church (as reflected not only in Vatican II but in all the documents and traditions of the Church's Magisterium), as well as those of Hauerwas's Methodist Church and Barth's Swiss Reformed Church, must not be brushed aside as insignificant. Faithful Mennonites and Roman Catholics are not referring to the same entity when they say "church." Thus, Hauerwas's church seems to be an abstraction. This is certainly not intended, given the concrete, historical nature of the witness that the church bears. I was also puzzled by the fact that the church is not only to witness to Christ and to produce such witnesses, but that (if I understand correctly) the church witnesses to its own witnesses. How can the church bear witness to *any* other than to the God revealed in Christ. This tends toward hagiography that glosses over the "warts" of the "saints" (and I know both Barth and Yoder, as examples, had their ample share). I for one do not find that genre to have any possible authority. All viewpoints (even atheists) have their "saints," each group canceling out the other. Also, because of its theo-biographical narrative format, many parts of this work read like book analyses strung together (though given Hauerwas's design, it would have been difficult to do otherwise where it does occur). Interestingly, Barth's own Gifford Lectures play essentially no role in Hauerwas's argument. And, given the formative role Christian pacifism plays in the last lecture, is it possible that the church is the church "only to the extent" that it espouses Christian pacifism ("bearing crosses")? If so, that would be an unusual ecclesiology indeed and outside the grain of the church's understanding of itself through twenty centuries. Christian positions like Paul Ramsay's "just war theory" do not appear incoherent upon their own hermeneutical bases (as does Yoder's upon his). As an aside, until the last chapter, Hauerwas's references to the Trinity, unlike Barth's usage, avoid resemblance to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan terminology. Furthermore, what is expressed in interesting formulas—"God speaking in Christ" or "the Incarnation of the God-self," rather than the Son—while more theo-linguistically current, makes Hauerwas *appear* to be a modalist, or a trinitarian adoptionist (like Ted Peters), or one for whom "Trinity" is not a reference

to the actual tri-personality of God but rather a mere revelatory symbol, a way of speaking (e.g. Tillich). Yet knowing Hauerwas's commitment to the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, I know that such could not have been his intention.

This is a very enlightening, surprising, corrective, instructive work. Highly recommended.

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*The Untamed God: A Philosophical Exploration of Divine Perfection, Simplicity and Immutability.* By Jay Wesley Richards. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003, 267 pages, \$26.00 paper.

In a *tour de force* exploring contemporary theology proper, Jay W. Richards, Vice-President of the Discovery Institute, navigates the subtle waters between traditional and current ideas of God to address the knotty problems of divine perfection, self-existence, simplicity, and immutability. The book models a well-researched and argued way of using biblical material as well as the tools of philosophy in doing (and teaching) theological studies.

The author upholds the necessary tenets of classical theism while underscoring its weaknesses in view of creation (is it better that the world and God exist than that only God exists?) and the incarnation (God's change of state from perfection to "relative ignorance, suffering, and degradation"; p. 16).

The basic question theologian-philosophers hold in tension is quite clear: "Can we hold to a biblical normativity, the principle of perfection, and the sovereign-aseity conviction while preserving God's *real* relationships with contingent creation and not view the world as one of God's constituents?" Richards expounds and evaluates two influential twentieth-century thinkers—Karl Barth and his *actualist substantialism*, and Charles Hartshorne and his *surrelativist dipolarity*—before proposing his theological essentialism in the context of theism. Without deferring to an open theism (and its critiques of classical theism), Richards notes, "Christians should affirm that God has an essence, which include his perfections and essential properties, and should attribute to God essential and contingent properties" (p. 17). In that distinction between God's essential and contingent properties *in a theistic sense* lies the resources of essentialism to support a biblical view of God.

The author does remarkable work in harnessing the apparatuses of modal logic in analytical philosophy—the S5 version, along with "possible-worlds" semantics—to critically assess the classical and process options in order to come up with an important alternative for Christian theists. The outline of his argument may be laid out thus:

1. S5 logic keeps from assigning temporal modalities to God. "The characteristic axiom of S5 makes the modal status of all propositions necessary—either necessarily necessary, necessarily possible, necessarily contingent or necessarily impossible" (p. 53–54).
2. God, by logic (confirming intuition), is necessarily necessary in all possible worlds, and essentialism can be used to attribute properties and perfections to the triune God. God has essential properties, which are just those properties he has in every possible world—for example, traditional perfections such as the perfection of power, knowledge, freedom, and goodness.

3. Because God is free to choose among alternatives, he also has contingent properties. All those properties that he has as a result of choosing this actual world are contingent external relational properties that he now possesses of his own volition. Clearly, God's choice among alternatives means that he foregoes possibilities (p. 193).
4. Creation is not necessitarian but by God's free choice. "The presence of the actual world, or of any world for that matter, neither increases his perfection nor assails his aseity. In choosing to create this actual world, God closes off all alternatives not compatible with that choice. This is because of his free choice and not from any necessity intrinsic or extrinsic to him. He chooses eternally to create the actual world and by implication to be the Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer of this world" (p. 239).
5. God's essential freedom, not complexity, is the source of any potentiality in God. "We attribute a type of potentiality to God, not because we conceive of him as built up from fundamental parts of potency and act but because he is free. His essential freedom is the source of his potentiality and contingency" (pp. 239–40).
6. God does not participate in properties anterior to him, but preeminently and essentially exemplifies them (p. 241, n. 1). "The doctrine of ideas offers a way to reconcile the best elements of realism (about abstract 'objects') . . . with a thoroughgoing theism. . . . Abstract ideas are best interpreted as eternal objects of divine thought, . . . the content of God's intellectual activity, . . . reflecting on his own being" (pp. 242–43).
7. Finally, one should stop infinite regress not with God's causal powers, whether grounded in his will or his intellect, but with God's eternal essence and actuality, which include his eternal thoughts and his free will. God's ideas, like his triune nature, perfect goodness, love, and knowledge, are not independent entities and objects. They are aspects of who God necessarily is (pp. 245–46).

Now, if God has accidental or contingent properties (#2), there still seems to be sense in which God can change. The author clarifies and maintains that the contingency of the content of God's knowledge is subtly different from a literal change in his knowledge. If God could have done otherwise, then God will have contingent or accidental properties, that is, properties that could change. "These contingent properties concerning God's relation to a contingent creation are the expression of his freedom, as are all his contingent properties; so they do not imply a significant ontological dependence of God on the world" (p. 202). Further, "if we apply perfection to God's essence (that is, his essential properties), there is less danger of imagining that God's perfection increases from state to state. That contingent truths about God and his accidental properties vary from moment to moment does not entail that such variation affects his perfection. His freedom to exist in various contingent states of affairs may be one aspect of his perfection, and essentially so, but the particular states of affairs themselves need not be" (pp. 181–82). So, "essentialism combined with eternalism comes quite close to meeting even the strongest version of divine immutability" (p. 207). "Therefore we conclude that God is immutable in those respects relevant to his essential perfection and aseity but 'mutable' with respect to certain contingent properties because of his freedom" (p. 212). In other words, he could have done otherwise.

I would seek additional comment on whether essentialism *entails* a trinitarian conclusion (or is it only easy for the *believer* to see the Trinity in God's essential properties?). At what point is biblical normativity brought into the discussion with other monotheisms of the essentialist kind? The question of whether the incarnation is grounds for the Trinity or the other way around, and whether God can and does (freely, of course) enter the temporal and material realm, must still be addressed. A stronger emphasis on divine knowledge of all necessary truths and abstracta as "God's personal, active,

and full" knowledge is encouraged, so that divine causal knowledge is not left by itself to fully comply with biblical data on the perfection of knowledge.

A reader could also suspect that Richards seeks to defend essentialism via theism (as its "secure, conceptual dwelling place"; p. 250), rather than defending theism via essentialism, as the thrust of the book. He wants us to use essentialist language without deciding on the metaphysical nature of properties, essences, universals, and the like. We agree that defining these things minimally as facts or truths about individual entities in the actual world does circumvent some problems. The author is aware of the question because whether this can be done at all prompts the question in the first place—essentialism in itself is a decision on God's metaphysical nature!

Along with many others, we eagerly await the author's future book endorsing divine ideas (intimated on p. 243, n. 5) to explore additional biblical nuances and possibly complete an outstanding duo in integrating analytic philosophy and systematic theology.

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*The Risen Jesus and Future Hope.* By Gary R. Habermas. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003, 239 pp., \$25.00 paper.

The subject of the resurrection is of perennial importance for both theology and apologetics. It is at the heart of the Christian faith, and by being so has inevitably been the subject of many works, including works of apologetics. This is true on both a scholarly and a popular level, as is witnessed by recent works such as N. T. Wright's *The Resurrection of the Son of God* and Lee Strobel's *The Case for Easter*.

One scholar who has devoted a large part of his career to the topic of the resurrection is Gary Habermas. I am unaware of anyone who has made a deeper study of the bodily resurrection of Jesus than Habermas or done more to defend its historicity. In this most recent work, he again defends the truth of the resurrection and draws out some of its implications. He uses the full resources of his learning on the subject but writes in a style readily available to the layperson.

The book is divided into two broad sections: the first, "A Resurrection Faith," is divided into six chapters; the second, "The Resurrection and some Practical Issues," consists of four chapters. Habermas's purpose is threefold: apologetic, in that he defends the historical truth of the risen Jesus; theological, in that he explains the meaning of the resurrection; and practical, in that he draws out what the resurrection should entail in the life of a Christian.

The first chapter covers the resurrection of Jesus as a historical event. Habermas employs the defense of the historicity of the resurrection that he has developed and used in many books and debates. The essence of his approach is to use only those facts whose historical reliability enjoys almost universal agreement among scholars. Using these core facts Habermas develops his case that the resurrection of Jesus must have occurred as an event in history because only the bodily resurrection can explain the facts.

Another important part of his apologetic methodology is that Habermas details the bankruptcy of naturalistic theories. These theories attempt to show that the core facts can be reasonably explained without believing that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. However, according to Habermas, all of these theories contain multiple flaws and should be rejected on historical grounds; indeed, twentieth-century naturalistic theories have been rejected by almost every scholar.

In his second chapter, "A Theistic Universe," Habermas argues that there are weighty arguments for God's existence and briefly examines four of them: (1) the epistemic argument that knowledge cannot be justified in naturalism; (2) the Kalam cosmological argument that the universe had a beginning in time and therefore must have been caused to come into existence by God; (3) the argument that there is too much information and specified complexity in the universe and especially living things to be accounted for without design; and (4) near death experiences. Some of these arguments have various versions; for example, Habermas lists three versions of the epistemic argument. He does not claim too much for these arguments, stating rather that these and other arguments make a strong cumulative case for theism and (especially) against naturalism. For example, the last argument from near-death experiences is really more of an argument against naturalism and physicalism than it is for theism: Granting that there is empirical evidence for human survival after death does not necessarily lead to theism, and Habermas does not claim that it does; rather, his limited point is that such evidence does undermine theism's main philosophic rival.

In the final pages of the chapter, Habermas argues that the philosophical case against either the existence or knowability of miracles fails. For example, he attacks the concept of the antecedent improbability of miracles, the notion that miracles are so *a priori* improbable that realistically there could never be enough evidence to justifiably believe in even one miracle. Finally, Habermas sets forth the final elements of his case for the acceptance of the miracle of a bodily risen Jesus: the evidence is in favor of theism and, furthermore, the arguments against miracles fail, so the historical evidence for the resurrection can be brought in with full force. This is a good, although brief, discussion of some theistic arguments and the case for miracles.

The following chapters in section one discuss the "Person and Teachings of Jesus," "The Kingdom of God," "Salvation and Radical Commitment," and "Eternal Life." Habermas defends the orthodox view of Christ and his teachings on such issues as the divinity of Jesus, the role of Christ as Savior, the need to put God and Christ ahead of everything else, and the reality of a future life.

One section that I found particularly interesting was in chapter four on the question of whether Jesus was mistaken on the time of his second coming. It is a common argument of various skeptics and theological liberals that Jesus was mistaken in that he believed and taught that his second coming would come within the lifetime of the generation that heard him speak. For example, Michael Martin brings up this argument in his book *The Case Against Christianity*. He argues that Jesus was wrong on this matter and therefore was just another deluded religious enthusiast. Habermas answers this objection with several different considerations, among which is the perspective that Jesus did not teach that the second coming must take place within the time of that generation, only that it might take place then. Habermas points out that because Jesus did not return within the lifetime of that generation, the gospel writers would have been saying that Jesus had been mistaken, a hard claim to swallow.

One criticism that I have of this section is that Habermas does not here examine the partial-preterist view that Jesus was not speaking of his second return to earth in glory; rather, he was speaking of the Jewish war in the late 60s AD, the destruction of the temple, and his return to heaven, not earth. This is an ancient, albeit minority view in the church, and of late has been championed by N. T. Wright and others. If true, this defuses the problem, for then Jesus' predictions on this matter *were* fulfilled within the lifetime of the generation to whom he spoke.

The final four chapters cover the "Challenging the Fear of Death," "Suffering and Jesus' Resurrection," "The Testimony of the Holy Spirit and Evidence," and "Jesus and the Authority of Scripture." In all of these chapters, Habermas is concerned to show both the doctrinal and personal side of the matters. In the final chapter, for example, he not

only defends the inerrancy of Scripture but also shows how this concept is important in the life of the believer in such matters as ethics.

One striking section is in chapter eight in which Habermas gives his personal testimony about suffering—in his case the death by stomach cancer of his first wife, Debbie. He shows that the doctrine of the resurrection is of great importance and comfort to believers especially in times of trouble and suffering, because all these enemies are in the end defeated.

*The Risen Jesus and Future Hope* is an excellent concise guide and defense of the physical resurrection of Jesus and the implications of its being true both in doctrine and in one's personal life. My own main interest in is apologetics, so I have emphasized the chapters on this subject. But anyone concerned with defending the resurrection and examining what it means should read this book.

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*Beyond the Impasse: Toward a Pneumatological Theology of Religions.* By Amos Yong. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003, 205 pp., \$17.99 paper.

Amos Yong, associate professor of Christian theology at Bethel College, joins a growing number of "evangelical" scholars (e.g. Clark Pinnock, Harold Netland, Millard Erickson, Terrance Tiessen, Vinoth Ramachandra, S. Mark Heim) who are contributing to the formulation of a Christian theology of religions. This work is both a revision and extension of a proposal first made by the author in his doctoral dissertation at Boston University (1998) under the supervision of Robert Cummings Neville. It also contains material that Yong has presented in several published articles.

Yong is convinced that evangelicals are at an impasse on this subject because previous theological proposals have assumed an exclusivist, inclusivist, or pluralist perspective concerning the salvation of non-Christians. The author, while committed personally to soteriological inclusivism, believes that a genuine theology of religions must move beyond issues that are strictly soteriological in nature towards adoption of a pneumatological perspective that will assist the church in discovering where the Holy Spirit works within the framework of non-Christian religious practices. This pneumatological approach "may open up new lines of dialogue and engagement with the religious other so that returning to the soteriological question later may mean returning to a different set of questions with a different framework" (p. 22).

Yong, as a Pentecostal theologian, not only affirms the comprehensive presence of the Holy Spirit in the world but also emphasizes the need for Christians to exercise proper discernment concerning the activity of the Spirit (or Spirits) in other faith traditions. While some Christians may receive the spiritual gift of discernment, the author believes that such discernment in the broadest sense should be understood as a "hermeneutics of life" that is "both a divine gift and human activity aimed at reading correctly the inner processes of all things—persons, institutions, events, rites, experiences, and so on" (p. 129). The author maintains that proper discernment is developed through three particular stages—the metaphysical, the biblical, and the theological and practical.

The theological framework for Yong's pneumatological model is guided by three controlling axioms. The first affirms that *God is universally present and active in the Spirit* (p. 44). This means one must investigate the ways the triune God is present in the cosmos, in nature, in human history, and human experience. It is the trinitarian framework of the pneumatological model that makes this theology of religions, according to Yong, distinctively *Christian*. The second axiom states that *God's Spirit is the life-breath*

of the *imago Dei* in every human being and the presupposition of all human relationships and communities (p. 45). This means “all human engagements with the ‘other’—whether that other be human others, the world, or the divine—are pneumatologically mediated.” Human beings, therefore, think, communicate, and relate as “spirit-beings” whose “quest for ultimate reality” proceeds from being individuals-in-communities. In other words, religious quests occur within a communal context. The third axiom affirms that *the religions of the world, like everything else that exists, are providentially sustained by the Spirit of God for divine purposes* (p. 46). Yong dismisses the *a priori* assumption that religions other than Christianity are devoid of divine presence and activity. Even if the practices of many religions reflect human endeavor to reach the ultimate, these practices serve “divine purposes centered around the full revelation of Jesus Christ and the impending kingdom of God.”

The author calls for the establishment of a foundational pneumatology in formulating a theology of religions. He does so in light of postmodernism’s rejection of traditional Cartesian foundationalism, a move that Yong views as mostly positive. He adopts an epistemic foundationalism that he terms “contrite fallibilism” (a term he borrows from C. S. Peirce) in which knowledge is provisional as it relates to a religious community’s questions and is “subject to the ongoing process of conversation and discovery” (p. 59). Yong draws some of his ideas from the work of the Catholic theologian Donald Gelpi who sees foundational pneumatology as helping one formulate an account of religious conversion in human experience. Although indebted to Gelpi’s theory of experience as a metaphysical construct, the author believes this type of foundationalism is tied too explicitly to Christian conversion experience and does not allow for the complex nature of human conversion experiences. Yong wishes to build on Gelpi’s model of experience and apply it to the universal human situation.

The attempt to apply foundational pneumatology to the formulation of a theology of religions means that Yong must overcome the Wittgensteinian notion that an individual’s religious knowledge and language are strictly a product of their cultural-linguistic background. The author, in order to counter this challenge, asserts that God can be seen as the “object” of religious encounters regardless of one’s faith tradition, because foundational pneumatology looks to general categories of religious claims that are drawn from the common human experience of the Spirit (p. 70). This comprehensive “system” of pneumatology allows for a particular faith’s truth claims to be tested against reality and against other competing religious systems that also claim to interpret reality correctly. This procedure will, in Yong’s opinion, allow the church to adopt a correspondence model of truth as it engages and dialogues with other world religions. This would require Christians to see this approach as a “pneumatology of quest” where their respective religious claims are open to criticism and correction through an authentic encounter with those in other faiths (p. 74). A “pneumatological imagination” must serve as an epistemic precondition for Christians to acknowledge the Spirit’s universal presence and to recognize the public nature of truth. Foundational pneumatology also requires the establishment of a robust theology of discernment that is “metaphysically and theologically sophisticated enough to account for the diversity of spirits” (including those that are demonic) even as it seeks to identify divine presence and activity in the world (p. 72).

The author enters into dialogue with theologians from the Eastern Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic traditions whose work has provided groundbreaking insights into the formulation of a pneumatological theology of religions. Yong finds the work of Eastern Orthodox theologian Georg Khodr to be helpful because Khodr’s rejection of the *filioque* means that the economy of the Spirit is not limited to the economy of the Son. The distinct economies of the Word and Spirit mean that the Spirit is free

to operate within the context of non-Christian religions. Other religions for Khodr may serve as “divine training schools” where communal religious practices, experiences, and even sacred texts can contain the anonymous presence of Christ or “Christic values.” The diversity of religions appears to be part of the “permanent *oikonomia* of God” as the economy of the Spirit allows other faiths to be in touch with God even if Christ is never confessed or disclosed through missionary efforts.

Protestant theologian Stanley Samartha contributes to the attempt to discern the Spirit’s presence by appealing to theocentric dimensions found in other faith practices. Those religions that demonstrate the traditional Christian understanding of “the fruit of the Spirit,” as well as piety, spontaneity, and the power to create new relationships and communities, stem from the same God in whom Christians place their faith through Christ by the power of the Spirit. Samartha concedes that, for Christians, to be in Christ means indeed to be in God. He is convinced, however, that to be in Christ is *not* the only way to be in God.

Jacques Dupuis’s pneumatology is formulated from a post-Vatican II Catholic perspective. Dupuis presupposes that the Holy Spirit mediates all genuine experiences of and encounters with God, even those in the non-Christian religions. In other words, the mystery of God is encountered in non-Christian faiths through the channels of sacred scripture and sacramental practices that constitute the respective religious traditions. Dupuis asserts that nothing can be added to the decisive revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God encountered through these non-Christian religious practices is also the Spirit of Christ. Dupuis sees the diversity of religions as part of God’s providential salvation plan in light (John 1:9) of the centrality of Christ. God speaks through the Son but also in other ways that include non-Christian religions; indeed, the truths of the mystery of Christ are intrinsically related to the truths found in all religious practices. The non-Christian religions, therefore, are part of the “eschatological reign of God” in which each serves as a diverse (although unequal) venue through which God seeks out persons through Word and Spirit.

In chapter five the author turns his attention to the work of Clark Pinnock, the theologian to whom Yong gives credit for the inspiration to undertake the task of developing a “broad” evangelical theology of religions. Although Pinnock labors to make an exegetical and theological case for soteriological inclusivism—particularly as it pertains to the universal work of the Spirit (*Flame of Love*)—Yong believes evangelical inclusivists have paid too little attention in their arguments to the question of “how the Spirit is to be discerned in the concrete world of the religions” (p. 128). An undeveloped set of criteria for discerning the religions, in the author’s opinion, has contributed to exclusivists’ objections to inclusivist soteriology. Pinnock’s “hermeneutic of hopefulness” rests on the twin axioms of God’s universal salvific will and the particularity of Jesus Christ for salvation. In his rejection of the *filioque* doctrine, Pinnock asserts that the economy of the Spirit is free to operate in a distinct way from that of the Son although the two are never disconnected. Pinnock’s systematic pneumatological theology asserts that the Spirit is at work in other religions and that divine truths have been deposited in them; however, it stops short of claiming that other faiths serve as vehicles of salvific grace. Pinnock is aware that conflicting doctrinal beliefs and truth claims exist among the world’s religions. He proposes that the Spirit’s presence can be discerned as persons of other faiths demonstrate self-sacrificing love, justice, the desire for peace, generosity, forgiveness, and care for the poor and ill. Yong sees this approach, however, as promoting “a natural morality” that fails to address how conflicting truth claims are to be adjudicated.

The author devotes the final two chapters to developing a theoretical and practical theology of discernment. Yong admits that spiritual discernment is a complex activity that must operate at several levels relative to the various dimensions of human life. He

borrowed from the pragmatic philosophy of Peirce the idea of “phenomenological *thirdness*” where laws, universals, and habits “shape the temporal modality (the thing in itself) and relationality of things” in the realm of reality (p. 133). In theological terms, Yong proposes that all persons in reality are what they are by virtue of having both form (*logos*) and spirit (*pneuma*); furthermore, no one can exist apart from these two. This concept of Word and Spirit is embodied in the notion of personhood, the forms of human community, and in the idea of demonic presence in both spiritual and concrete forms. The Word is the objective aspect of engaging truth that refers to the biblical text and the historical person of Jesus Christ. The Spirit is the subjective aspect and focuses on the illumination of the Word to the readers-in-community and to the process of applying the Word to the contemporary context.

Yong turns to a brief study of the word “discern” as it is used in the Old and New Testaments. He finds that the biblical concept of the word (particularly in the OT) emphasizes a tension between discernment as a gift from God and as a God-given innate human capacity. In the NT, according to Yong, moral discernment appears to be tied to the development of human faculties of perception. Discernment, however, is also phenomenological in the sense that one must carefully observe and study the behaviors and manifestations of a thing in question in order “to pierce through its outer forms into the inner habits, dispositions, tendencies, and powers” (p. 151). Yong uses his own Assemblies of God denomination as an example of how phenomenological discernment might be used. In order to determine whether the “spirit of the AG” is genuinely that of the Holy Spirit, the observer would need to make a comprehensive assessment of the denomination as it manifests itself at various levels and in various forms. The author admits in the end, however, that it is a difficult (and highly subjective) task to develop definitive criteria for discerning the outer and inner aspects of things. This task is just as arduous when it comes to spiritual discernment in world religions.

Yong concludes his work by calling for extensive interreligious and intercultural engagement among religions, a *rapprochement* that seeks to respect the particularities of the different traditions even as self-critical reflection is utilized regarding a particular faith’s tradition. Such dialogue from a Christian perspective would need to appropriate some of the methods utilized in the comparative study of religions in an attempt to distinguish divine and human practices from the demonic in other faiths. It is Yong’s conviction that a theology of religions can proceed only as “a rigorously constructed comparative enterprise.” The formulation of comparative categories, however, must exhibit a degree of vagueness so as to accentuate the important things being compared (as determined by the criteria) and to provide for an analysis of similarities and contrasts (e.g. applying the hermeneutics used in interpreting Christian Scripture to understanding the sacred texts of other faiths). Such comparative work is necessary if Christian theologians and laypersons are to determine whether the Spirit is present or absent in the practices and beliefs of the world’s religions.

Most readers of this work will need some knowledge of the philosophical concepts appropriated by the author in order to grasp his overall argument. The book, therefore, may be of the most benefit to students and theologians who are familiar with contemporary issues in pneumatology. Yong’s work is the boldest attempt yet by an evangelical theologian to develop a comprehensive theology of religions from an inclusivist perspective. Unlike most contemporary non-evangelical approaches to the issue, the author takes seriously the presence of demonic forces within the practices of non-Christian faiths. A great strength of the work is the fact that Yong’s innovative approach draws attention to the need for evangelicals to absorb a healthy trinitarian perspective as it relates to Christian truth claims in the dialogue with other faiths. Whether Yong’s pneumatological/trinitarian approach is successful remains a matter of debate. I

present just three issues that might prove problematic for his approach. While Yong is to be commended for his contribution to this important theological issue, his proposal raises many serious questions.

First, among the controlling axioms in the author's model is the belief that the Holy Spirit is universally present and active throughout the world, and that this includes a divine presence in certain non-Christian practices. If one (correctly) concedes that certain universal truths (from a Christian perspective) are found in the faith confessions of the various world religions, it begs the question of why such truths should be discerned as evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence. Could not the Christian doctrine of divine common grace account for the reality of such truths without necessarily signaling that the triune God is directly present in revealing those truths? Inclusivists will no doubt protest that the appeal to common grace relies too heavily on traditional Reformed thought. Sinclair Ferguson's insights (*The Holy Spirit* 244) on the cosmic presence of the Spirit, however, cannot be ignored. Ferguson notes that the New Testament's testimony places the Holy Spirit in an antithetical relationship with the spirit of the non-Christian world, because the world cannot know or relate to God's Spirit (John 14:17; 16:8–11; 1 Cor 2:12–14; 1 John 4:3). While it may be said that all truth is God's truth and that God may have chosen to reveal these truths through certain non-Christian religious practices, should such displays be construed to mean that the Spirit is present in a transforming fashion?

Second, Yong claims that his proposal is genuinely trinitarian because he rejects the *filioque* clause and gives emphasis to the distinctive economic work of the Word and Spirit ("the two hands of God") in various world communities. But this emphasis by Yong (as well as Pinnock, Khodr, Samartha, and Dupuis) seems ultimately to drive a wedge between the intimate relationship of the Son and Spirit within the Godhead. Although inclusivists claim that Christ can in some way be anonymously present through the economy of the Spirit, is such a pneumatological formulation the only means by which we know the being of God and his activity in the world? Such a view appears to compromise the very freedom of God who, according to Scripture, does not subordinate the Son's mission to that of the Spirit but, instead, gives the Spirit to the world in order that the Father and Son might be glorified and may be made known (John 15:26).

Finally, is it possible in Yong's system to genuinely distinguish the presence of Holy Spirit from the presence of spirits that are demonic or materialistic in nature? Yong admits that phenomenological discernment is complex, but he chooses to leave the reader with an essentially theoretical proposal that offers little in the form of practical application. One searches in vain for specific, concrete examples of how day-to-day spiritual discernment might be utilized in the respective sacred practices of the various world religions. It is ironic that Yong criticizes Pinnock's pneumatology for being too subjective even while he himself espouses criteria that must be intentionally vague in formulating comparative categories so as to adjudicate conflicting religious truth claims. Even if Yong could apply his system of phenomenological discernment to his own denomination's institutions, such a method might not be so easily appropriated in the process of analyzing diverse religious traditions. While competence in comparative methodology is useful in interreligious dialogue, the reader is left to wonder what resource (Scripture, tradition, reason, experience, etc.) in Yong's proposal serves as the ultimate authority for true spiritual discernment. Yong claims he is only "sketching" out a program of spiritual discernment. One must hope that he will provide a more complete portrait in his future work in this area.

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*Accordance* Version 6.4. Oak Tree Software.

Since its release in 1994, *Accordance* has had its enthusiastic followers. Now the software, developed and distributed by Oak Tree Software ([www.OakSoft.com](http://www.OakSoft.com)), is available also for the PC user through the inexpensive Macintosh Emulator device. The Scholar's Collection CD-ROM offers a selection of Greek and Hebrew texts as well as scholarly reference works and translations. The unlock system makes it possible for each user to add specific tools of his or her choice. Critical for the serious Bible student is access to grammatically tagged Greek and Hebrew texts. The *Accordance* leads the way in making available tagged texts of the Mishnah, the Pseudepigrapha, the Targums, Inscriptions, Dead Sea Scrolls, Josephus, and the Apostolic Fathers. Other specialized research tools include the MT/LXX Parallel and the Qumran Index, as well as many lexicons (see further below).

At least at present, *Accordance* is designed only to run on the Macintosh operating system. PC users, however, may acquire the Basilisk II software program that emulates a Mac environment for Windows. Once installed, one becomes immersed in the Mac OS world and will discover a virtual exegetical goldmine in form of the *Accordance* program. Those not accustomed to the Mac OS, however, may want to take some time to acquaint themselves with the program in order to get the most out of their research. Once they gain proficiency in navigating through both the Mac environment and *Accordance*, they will discover their overall user-friendliness.

The main utility of the *Accordance* program is that it enables the serious Bible student to conduct detailed searches in a variety of Greek, Hebrew, and English texts. Amid the basic drop-down menus and floating dialogue boxes the search entry box allows the user to search verses, words, phrases, and even grammatical constructions with ease and accuracy. Advanced syntactical studies are made possible by *Accordance's* graphical searches. The Greek construct window, for example, furnishes several lexical elements that can be connected by an arch that delimits items such as agreement or disagreement between words separated in the text. Thus, one could search for the anarthrous aorist infinitive followed by a dative or accusative within five words.

As mentioned, the distinguishing aspect of the *Accordance* program is most apparent in the massive databases of primary texts (if unlocked). It includes the fully tagged Hebrew Bible, Greek NT (in the case of the Gospels, also the GNT text-critical apparatus), LXX, and all the major English translations. More significantly, it also includes the fully tagged Dead Sea Scrolls (as well as the Qumran Index), Apostolic Fathers, Josephus, Targums, the Mishnah, the Samaritan Pentateuch, Hebrew Inscriptions, and the Greek OT Pseudepigrapha. In addition, the Apocryphal Gospels will be available in the near future. These primary texts are searchable in their original languages, and in most cases also in English translation. Thus scholars may conduct first-rate, cutting-edge research in a highly accessible format. Those interested in the use of the OT in the NT now have the tools at their disposal to investigate rather quickly how a given OT passage was interpreted during the Second temple period.

Another distinctive feature of *Accordance* relates to the abundant reference and analytical modules available. *Accordance* contains a number of lexical resources such as BDB, *HALOT*, Liddell & Scott, Thayer, *TNDT*, Louw and Nida, BDAG, and Wallace's Greek grammar (in the case of grammatically tagged texts, but not in the reference and analytical lexicon modules, the full parsing is revealed by moving the cursor over a given word). One also finds parallel MT/LXX databases, Synoptic parallels in Greek or English, and perhaps most notable of all, the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*, the most extensive collection of ancient Greek texts from about 800 BC to the present. However, the TLG must be purchased separately and then imported into *Accordance*. Aside from these

lexical tools, *Accordance* also references a variety of OT and NT commentaries, including the *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, *The Essential IVP Reference Collection* (including such volumes as the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*), and the Theological Journal Library. Finally, one can make use of a number of maps, charts, and statistical details on word usage.

Hours of laborious study are now reduced to a fraction of the time it would have previously taken to conduct them owing to the arsenal of texts and tools available through this technological marvel. A network of searches, cross-references, comparatives studies, semantic field analyses, and syntactical data maximizes one's time and energy. All research may be saved, printed, and exported into a word processing program. Simply by pressing Alt-Tab one can switch back and forth between the Mac OS and another program such as MS Word. Those who primarily use a Windows-based word processor can easily incorporate the results of the *Accordance* research. However, the Basilisk II emulation program does place a strain on one's system resources, so that it is best not to have too many programs running at once.

As any other program, *Accordance* 6.4 requires frequent and consistent use before the user is fully able to enjoy all of its many functions. Depending on their computer savvy, it may take some longer than others to learn how to use this program. Although *Accordance* is user-friendly overall, the abundance of options and features may prove overwhelming to some. The User Guide provides step-by-step instructions for operating the software, but this also demands time and patience for the user if he or she is to derive maximum benefit. *Accordance* is primarily marketed for scholars and pastors, though the software is also marketed to lay users in form of a different Library series with English-only works, whose cost is significantly less than for the Scholar's CD. The program does require a certain measure of familiarity with using software; those not committed to serious and intensive study may want to find a less sophisticated program.

Such a high-powered program translates into a high-cost purchase. In order to have access to most of the distinctive modules that makes this program so amazing, one must be willing to spend close to fifteen hundred dollars. Although the "Core Bundle" costs about two hundred dollars, this only contains very basic Bible databases (a little less than BibleWorks). Therefore, most individuals may have to start with the "Core Bundle" and gradually add more modules as their finances allow. This said, *Accordance* stands head and shoulders above their competitors as the most comprehensive and versatile Bible program on the market. All those dedicated to world-class biblical studies will benefit greatly from the resources offered by this program.

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