

BOOK REVIEWS

The Essential Bible Companion: Key Insights for Reading God's Word. By John H. Walton, Mark L. Strauss, and Ted Cooper, Jr. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006, 150 pp., \$14.99 paper.

As designed, *The Essential Bible Companion* is an elementary introduction to each individual book of the Bible. This will be beneficial for a beginning Bible reader, for Sunday School teachers aiming to give a 45-minute synopsis of a book, and perhaps for an undergraduate Bible Survey course. Like the Testaments the authors seek to summarize, there is great continuity between the OT and NT sections of the book. Most of the books in the OT and NT are summarized on two pages in an easy-to-use fashion (some of the OT prophetic books are combined and Revelation gets four pages). The summary of each book approximates the first page of an average study Bible: it includes key concepts, purpose statements, and information regarding dating. It goes beyond many study Bibles in that it is considerably more user-friendly with colorful maps, enjoyable pictures, and helpful timelines. For the Gospels, the book gives brief, but helpful, three- or four-point outlines. Unfortunately, this practice is limited to the Gospels; brief outlines for the rest of the biblical books would have contributed greatly to the design of this Bible companion.

While continuity assists aesthetically and pedagogically, there is—again like the two Testaments themselves—some discontinuity between the OT and NT sections of the book. Although this discontinuity in no way hinders its readability, it does make evident some omissions that might have been helpfully added. The OT section has “Key Concepts,” “Key Terms,” and “Key Teachings about God.” But the NT section seems to combine all of these into the much shorter “Key Themes.” Arguably, this is easier to do for the NT books, but I think it would not have been overly difficult to do for the OT section also, and would have shortened things considerably. Furthermore, “Key Terms” that are in the OT section are also spelled out in the glossary and therefore could have simply been listed (without definition) for reference in the glossary. I also see little value in the “People to Know” section; significant names were generally mentioned already in the “Purpose” overview. Space saved in these areas could have been used to include brief outlines and helpful information on matters of special introduction (e.g. possible authorship or recipients) that may have helped with understanding the “purpose,” subtly assisting readers to determine a book’s purpose for themselves. One thing I did enjoy was Walton’s selection of “key verses” (although Gen 3:15 and Psalm 1 were conspicuously absent). These verses could be easily memorized and supplement well Ted Cooper’s *The Bible in 90 Days*.

The NT section was more profitably organized, removing the key concepts, words, people, and teaching and replacing it with “key themes,” “summary overview,” “authorship information,” and “interesting facts.” The “Overview” features just 1–3 sentences summarizing each book. This is tremendously helpful for the beginning reader. The “Interesting Facts” sections were indeed always interesting and included information on the deaths of Paul and Peter, comments on Gnosticism, famous passages like the armor of God and the second coming, and inner-biblical connections. It was informative and made the whole read more enjoyable.

My small organizational criticisms should in no way take away from the substantial benefits of the book. *The Essential Bible Companion* should be commended as a helpful aid for foundational study of the Bible.

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A Student's Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results.
By Paul D. Wegner. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 336 pp., \$17.00 paper.

Paul Wegner has provided teachers and students with a clearly written and wonderfully illustrated introduction to the practice of textual criticism of the entire Bible. (Most recent treatments focus on either OT or NT.) He introduces his topic with an example from each testament where modern versions vary in their handling of variant readings: (1) How many men were killed when they looked into the ark (1 Sam 6:19)? (2) How should the Lord's Prayer read in Luke 11:4? These two passages quickly whet the reader's appetite for the why and how of textual criticism.

The author organizes his book in four major parts. Parts one and four deal with general issues. Part two deals with the OT, and part three with the NT. Chapter 1 gives a basic introduction to textual criticism. The author discusses a variety of ways to understand the goal of textual criticism, from restoring the original composition to restoring all literary editions of the OT (see the table on p. 31). He articulates well the basic differences in the practice of textual criticism in the OT (fewer manuscripts, but better ones) as compared with the NT (more manuscripts, but not as carefully preserved).

Chapter 2 discusses the copying errors that may be observed by examining variant readings. Scribal errors are categorized as either unintentional or intentional. In each case, an example is given from the OT, and then the same error is illustrated in the NT. This way of presenting possible copying errors will have the advantage of reinforcement for the student, but this advantage may be offset by the student's having to read the same chapter twice in two different courses. The author often includes examples of similar "scribal" errors that occur in English, and this will be very helpful for students.

The final chapter in the first part of the book deals with the history of the transmission of the biblical text. The first part covers the OT and describes the history of copying practices during five time periods. Prior to 400 BC, the focus is on four questions: the language and script in which the OT was written; the issue of continuous writing (i.e. without spaces between words); the kinds of materials that were written on; and who maintained these texts in this period. From 400 BC—AD 100 there were two competing tendencies: preservation of the text and revision of the text. The author mentions three kinds of revisions: change from the archaic script to the square script; change of spelling; and change of grammar. From AD 100–500 there was a more standard form of the OT text that was transmitted by the Tannaim and the Amoraim. From AD 500–1000 the Masoretes transmitted the text they had received and added vowel points, accent marks, and their own careful notes. The transmission of the NT text is covered more briefly in two time periods—prior to and after AD 100. The discussion emphasizes the kinds of materials used for copying and the level of discipline in the copying process (less discipline in the first two centuries, but greater discipline beginning in the fifth century). The author closes this part of the book with an interesting comparison between those Jewish scribes who transmitted the proto-MT against other versions of the OT text and

the “mainstream” Christians who faithfully transmitted the NT documents against the opposition of those such as Marcion who held other views.

Chapter 4 presents a brief history of the transmission of the OT. Topics include the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Septuagint; the emergence of a unified Hebrew text in the first century AD; and versions and early Hebrew editions. The chapter closes with a helpful excursus that introduces the reader to the layout and principles of the principal modern diplomatic editions of the Hebrew Bible.

Chapter 5 discusses how to determine the most likely reading of the OT. The major steps include assembling the evidence (what are the possible readings) and making the appropriate selection of the most plausible original reading. Chapter 6 brings the discussion of part two to a close by describing in detail the various sources a text critic must work with to determine possible variants. There is some repetition between chapters 4 and 6, with the latter chapter usually offering more detail. I would have opted for integrating the content of chapter 6 into chapter 4. This would then lead more cleanly into the description of the actual practice of textual criticism in chapter 5.

Part three covers the same ground for the NT that part two covers for the OT. Chapter seven introduces the history of NT textual criticism. Excursus 2 provides orientation to the two main critical texts for the NT—the United Bible Society text and the Nestle-Aland text. The Nestle-Aland text is mentioned, but little attention is given to it. Teachers who encourage use of the Nestle-Aland text will need to supplement the material in this chapter for their students.

Chapter 8 discusses determining the most plausible reading. The chapter lists a sampling of NT texts on which the student can practice. Chapter 9 explores the sources that must be used to carry out textual criticism of the NT. I did not notice the same degree of overlap between the content of chapters 7 and 9 that I did in the earlier part of the book.

Part four, a single chapter, deals with ancient versions that for the most part are not as important in the practice of textual criticism. These versions are grouped into eastern and western versions. A number of these versions are translations from the Septuagint, so their usefulness, at least for direct OT textual analysis, is minimal. In his conclusion the author rightly reemphasizes the importance of perspective in textual criticism of the Bible. A large amount of the text is certain, and the small part of the text that is subject to text critical analysis does not affect any major biblical doctrine.

Wegner and InterVarsity are to be thanked for making this book available. Including an overview of both OT and NT textual criticism in a single, reasonably priced, book will benefit both schools and students in a day of escalating book prices.

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Interpreting the Bible: A Handbook of Terms and Methods. By W. Randolph Tate. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006, 482 pp., \$29.95 paper.

Currently the topic of hermeneutics is one of the most complex subjects in biblical studies. This could be attributed to a myriad of factors. No doubt Schleiermacher’s redefining the locus of Christianity in terms of an existential encounter with the transcendent; Bultmann’s famous project of demythologizing the NT; the impact on modern literary studies by the school of new criticism; the linguistic revolution instilled by Wittgenstein’s concept of language games; and the attacks on western metaphysics

pioneered by Deriddian deconstructionism all have their place in breeding the host of contemporary questions that arise when discussing the factors involved in interpreting religious texts, or any texts for that matter.

These challenges notwithstanding, at a more fundamental level hermeneutics is a crux issue for two easily observable reasons. First, exegetical and theological debates typically commence precisely because scholars and theologians are constantly engaging each other via comparing and contrasting their different interpretations of assorted biblical texts. The present intellectual climate does not suggest this reality is going to diminish any time soon. A second factor that makes hermeneutics such a critical area of concern today is that while evangelicals are keenly aware of how actual interpretations of texts differ in content, they are even more sensitive to how the very activity of interpreting is performed with such diversity by given traditions and exegetes. Note, then, that the focus upon the nature of interpretation is not primarily about the alleged "end result," namely a given analysis of textual meaning. Rather, it relates to all the epistemic dynamics that are at work when the human mind interacts simultaneously with its cultural surroundings, noetic structures, and a given literary work. Consequently, hermeneutics is a topic that is interrelated with a cluster of subjects, including linguistic theory, ontology, and philosophy of language.

Needless to say, the emerging solidarity between this subject and biblical studies has spawned a legion of monographs, articles, and books. When this happens, the material seems to become unmasterable because the bibliography of works grows exponentially, and a particular set of terms evolves as scholars continue to articulate and qualify their ideas on the subject. It is in the midst of these challenges that W. Randolph Tate, Professor of Humanities at Evangel University in Springfield, Missouri, has produced a new dictionary of terms that are commonly used in literature relating to studies in hermeneutics. Tate has already proven his competence in this area through previous publications, including an intermediate textbook on biblical interpretation and a critical work that engages Umberto Eco's and Wolfgang Iser's use of a reader-oriented approach to literary criticism. Now in this new work Tate provides articles on assorted words, concepts, and even movements that are pertinent to the exegetical and philosophical complexities of biblical hermeneutics.

Specifically, the overall scope of the dictionary's content can be assessed in four broad categories. One entails various terms that pertain to biblical research in general and therefore cover issues relating to authorship, textual criticism, Bible translation, inter-testamental history, and Bible backgrounds. Another major portion of words include definitions of both older and more contemporary theological perspectives that continue to be influential in biblical studies and assorted doctrinal terms that explicitly affect the way one interprets Scripture as a text. Closely related are numerous articles on theories of language and philosophical schools that have become prominent in present-day academic discussions about textual interpretation. Another segment of terms covers multiple ideas that are germane to linguistics and literary studies. Also, in conjunction with the actual words that are defined in the dictionary itself, Tate includes selected bibliographies on literary theory, hermeneutics, and biblical studies, as well as two appendices on current structural-critical issues in the Gospel of Mark, which are indeed helpful for students who desire to engage in further research on any of these topics.

Tate has provided a helpful tool for beginning students as well as advanced graduates and even professors. The work is broad enough that it can be used in an array of disciplines whether they pertain to the areas of OT, NT, theology, linguistics, or philosophy of language. In addition, Tate maintains a difficult balance in being able to define terms accurately and many times concisely without being reductionistic or incoherent. So for the most part, a student can read a given article, be exposed to the fundamental usage of the word under consideration, and see how it coincides with other terms in the overall

context of biblical and literary disciplines. However, the title can be a bit misleading for beginners; the book surveys terms that are not merely pertinent to biblical studies as such, since textual interpretation has become such a broad subject. But if a student or professor is interested in staying up to date on hermeneutics as a philosophical and/or biblical discipline, having access to this work can definitely aid in that goal.

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Recalling the Hope of Glory: Biblical Worship from the Garden to New Creation. By Allen P. Ross. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, 591 pp., \$35.99.

Writing a biblical theology of worship is an extraordinarily difficult task because it requires the author to know everything about everything. To accomplish the task well requires a mastery of the contents of the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation and an opinion on virtually every challenging issue in between. In a day when scholars seem to know more and more about less and less, few would even undertake such a daunting endeavor. Yet we have long needed a book that can help us with the task of applying God's Word to the challenge and privilege of worshipping him.

Recalling the Hope of Glory is just such a book. Not only does Ross explore the biblical teaching on the subject, he also explores the practice of the early church and anticipates the joy of worship in glory. This is no dry piece of academic work but the rich melding of scholarly insight and practical application. The scholar will find much food for thought in its pages, but the pastor and worship leader will find it equally stimulating and challenging.

Ross defines worship as "the celebration of being in covenant fellowship with the sovereign and holy triune God, by means of the reverent adoration and spontaneous praise of God's nature and works, the expressed commitment of trust and obedience to the covenant responsibilities and the memorial reenactment of entering into covenant through ritual acts, all with the confident anticipation of the fulfillment of the covenant promises in glory" (pp. 67–68). This definition is rather a mouthful, but it seeks to represent faithfully the rich diversity of elements that are encompassed under the general term of "worship." It skillfully balances the elements of transcendence (the worship of a high and holy God) and immanence (a God who has come near to us in covenant), of the recalling the events of the past (memorial reenactment) and looking forward to the future (anticipation of glory), while rightly foregrounding the central note of celebration.

As might be expected, given Allen Ross's credentials as an OT scholar, he provides a full treatment of the biblical materials on worship. He rightly begins his survey with worship in the Garden of Eden, prior to the fall, and continues it through to the anticipations of heavenly worship in the Book of Revelation. He considers worship as it was originally instituted by God and authorized by him and discusses the prophetic critiques of aberrant worship, which show us the unfortunate reality of Israelite worship throughout much of the nation's history. Critical scholars would do well to note that this latter material correlates exactly with the archaeological data showing the inroads made by syncretism into the community of faith, demonstrating once again the accuracy of the biblical account of history. Christians, too, often have an overly rosy view of Israelite worship, assuming that the laws given by God were routinely obeyed by his people. On the contrary, the past was no golden age of perfect obedience, any more than is the present.

By way of critique, there are a couple of substantial issues Ross does not address. There is no clear discussion of the hermeneutical question, "How do we know how we should worship?" The assumption seems to be that if we merely elucidate God's standard for worship in the Scriptures by way of command and precept, then we can directly draw appropriate parallels for our own worship. The result is a strong emphasis on the lines of continuity within the biblical material on worship, and between this material and our contemporary situation. Yet there are also significant discontinuities within the unfolding revelation of how God is to be worshipped as well, not merely the quantum change that is inaugurated with the coming of the Messiah. The temple is not the same as the tabernacle, and both represent a significant shift in the mode of worship from the worship of the patriarchs. Which of these provide the models for our worship? How can we tell? The result of neglecting these discontinuities is at times a rather flat reading of the biblical data. In addition, readers from a Reformed perspective will seek in vain for a discussion of the Regulative Principle of Worship: do we need a positive warrant from the Scriptures to worship God in a particular way or is the absence of condemnation a sufficient authorization? Historically, this has been a crucial question in the application of the biblical materials that Ross has provided for us in such profound measure, and it would have been helpful to see him wrestle with it.

In addition to these broad questions, there are inevitably minor quibbles with a work of such vast scope. His material on the ministry of women in the OT (p. 215) is unlikely to change the minds of complementarians. Likewise, there is no record in the biblical text of a group of regular dancers in the sanctuary (p. 260); had there been a parallel group of dancers alongside the Levitical singers, it is unthinkable the Chronicler would have failed to describe them. Psalm 87:7 more probably describes a group of worshippers who spontaneously express their joy physically in the form of dance while they sing, which is something rather different. In a book of this nature, however, such minor disagreements are inevitable and will themselves prompt alert readers to think through their own positions more clearly.

To sum up, this is an essential resource for anyone interested in the biblical material on worship, and especially for those called to the challenging task of leading God's people before his heavenly throne week after week. A thorough and careful study of this book will enhance and strengthen the worship of the church of Jesus Christ as we await his glorious return.

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Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living a Generous Life. By Mark Allan Powell. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xviii + 186 pp., \$13.00.

Powell has produced a fine specimen of what may be the rarest species in the genus *theologica litteratura*: an accessible and engaging text from a top-flight scholar, addressing a critical issue in the life of churches and individual believers. An introduction describes the book's two parts: "Belonging to God," an orientation to Scripture's message on giving; and "Our Duty and Delight," putting the biblical orientation into practice in light of Scripture and church life.

"Belonging to God" teaches that giving ourselves to God and placing our resources under his rule is the smartest decision we can make: "If we really do belong to God and if we really do put God in charge of everything, we will not be the worse for it" (p. 3).

The opening chapter challenges shallow motives for giving and stresses giving out of love for God. Giving is worship; love and sacrificial devotion to God are prior to other concerns, such as the impact of our giving on earthly recipients.

The second chapter stresses the “good news” of giving (p. 30): God’s ownership of all things is liberating. Stewardship is a “high privilege” based on God’s creation, redemption (stewardship is not just a response to salvation; “rather, belonging to God and living for Christ are ways of describing what it means to be redeemed,” p. 35), and sustenance.

The third chapter expounds on the critical role of financial stewardship in Christian discipleship. Powell wisely makes much of Jesus’ declaration that our heart is where our treasure is (p. 53). As with other spiritual disciplines, our giving has an impact on the disposition and condition of our heart.

“Our Duty and Delight” builds on the first half of the book and narrows the focus to the specifics of giving. The fourth chapter offers a rubric for ensuring that we witness to Jesus’ reign over all aspects of finances, reminding us (with a preacher-friendly acronym) that faithful stewards Acquire, Regard, Manage, and Spend money in God-honoring ways. Powell here and elsewhere attempts to avoid undue stress on sacrifice (but is this really a significant danger in American Christianity?) and arbitrary distinctions between necessities and luxuries (but see 1 Tim 6:9–10). Instead he admonishes readers to a “joy-filled life” based on God’s approval of our enjoyment of creation, along with careful reflection on what we can joyfully surrender for Jesus’ sake. Here he affirms Schneider’s call to “godly materialism” and challenges Craig Blomberg’s call to moderation (without naming the latter, pp. 99–101).

The fifth chapter, “Faithful Giving,” explores the biblical call to give, including ten motives and fifteen principles, the latter derived from 2 Corinthians 8–9. Powell’s use of Scripture shines in this chapter. He provides the only list I have found in print of the NT’s own priorities for Christian giving (pp. 110–12).

The closing chapters, “Support and Sacrifice” and “How Much,” offer reflections on the extent of giving and a creative, common-sense program for giving out of both duty (support) and delight (sacrifice). Powell rightly argues that giving to one’s congregation should not revolve around the tithe: “The standard is an arbitrary one anyway, far from an exact emulation of what anyone was actually practicing [or was commanded to practice] in biblical times” (p. 162). In its place he substitutes a unique, personally imposed obligation to one’s congregation: sacrificial giving follows above and beyond obligation.

Negatively, it seems as though the twenty-first-century American church’s values sometimes go unexamined; the biblical call to moderation and radical sacrifice often seems muted (but see, e.g., pp.170–71). Powell’s interests in pure motives and avoidance of guilt and manipulation are well placed but sometimes overstressed, distracting from other biblical emphases. Jesus, Powell claims, is not a fundraiser with any particular giving agenda (p. 54); this certainly seems to be challenged by the three passages he cites on the same page, among many others. *Giving to God* might best be used in tandem with more “prophetic” treatments of giving, such as those by Blomberg, Alcorn, or Sider.

But the positives far outweigh the negatives. This text belongs on the shelves of preachers, elders, deacons, lay leaders, and anyone else wishing to apply God’s Word to their finances. It will not surprise those familiar with Powell’s scholarly work that *Giving to God* is a well-conceived, well-executed book, written in a popular style and very accessible in content and arrangement. Charts, quotes, and useful study questions buttress main points. Quality, brevity, and price should earn it a home in many college or seminary courses on practical theology, for while preachers must preach and teach on giving and incorporate offerings into church services, they are seldom given affordable biblical tools to help them accomplish such tasks. The book also contains a Scripture index and suggested reading list with works from across the theological spectrum.

(Some helpful popular evangelical authors such as Alcorn are omitted, as are authors with a prophetic edge, such as Sider.)

Powell meets his professed goal, namely, the production of “a guide to biblical stewardship” (p. ix). The result is an important text worthy of widespread use.

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Shepherds after My own Heart: Pastoral Traditions and Leadership in the Bible. By Timothy S. Laniak. New Studies in Biblical Theology, 20. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 313 pp., \$24.00 paper.

In this volume, Timothy Laniak has attempted to provide an exhaustive study of the shepherd metaphor in the Bible. He has also given a helpful overview of the metaphor in the ancient Near Eastern world. The present volume is largely an overview of the texts rather than a careful exegesis of pertinent passages, a feature that is both the strength of the book as well as its weakness (as is the case with any survey). As a survey the book provides an impressive overview of a very important and often misunderstood biblical metaphor. The author’s ability to do cross-disciplinary work is both unusual and admirable given the complexities of biblical studies today.

The book is, in my opinion, a must-read for both ministers and scholars because it locates the metaphor in its original context (kingship) and, inferentially, discredits popular views of the metaphor. A single book study of a metaphor of this magnitude is likely to generate criticism from those who have specialized in the various biblical disciplines. Laniak has correctly identified the essence of the metaphor in this statement: “Just rule, military protection, abundant provision: these are the shepherd ruler’s traditional responsibilities” (p. 64). At first glance, it would seem very strange to associate militarism with the shepherd metaphor, but militarism is a common theme in many of the shepherd contexts, whether Mesopotamian, Egyptian, or the Bible. There are other unusual associations as well such as “healing” (p. 81) and “law-giving” (p. 83), to name a few. These various activities find their context not primarily in the metaphor of animal husbandry but in the meaning of the metaphor—namely, kingship. Take, for example, his treatment of Psalm 23: “While shepherd/sheep imagery may fade towards the end of the psalm, it still provides a comprehensive rubric for this poetic reflection on God’s presence in the life of an individual in his ‘flock’” (p. 112). In fact, scholars have struggled for years with the jarring shift from the shepherd imagery to a military context and have often suggested that the Psalm is a composite of two or three different sources. In fact, the shift is only “jarring” if the shepherd imagery (i.e. the animal world) is the organizing principle rather than the object of the imagery, which is kingship. Laniak consistently animates the imagery, and thus, in the case of Psalm 23, the individual components of the imagery (rod, staff, green pastures) are explained in light of the animal world rather than explaining the psalm in light of the text’s goal of glorifying God for his providing and protecting activities (probably celebrating his deliverance in the wilderness as in Pamela Milne, “Psalm 23: Echoes of the Exodus,” *SR* 4 [1974–75] 237–47).

This is, I think, one of Laniak’s most difficult tasks in explaining this metaphor. How much of the individual components of the metaphor should be “animated” rather than the central “theme” of the metaphor, which is clearly kingship? Take, for example, an inscription from the Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I (c. 1245–1208 BC): “The king (who is) the choice of the god Enlil, the one who shepherds his land in green pastures with his beneficent staff, foremost purification priest, designate of the god An, the

one who with his *ferce* (emphasis his) valor subdued princes (and) all kings, faithful shepherd, desired of the god Ea, the one who has established in victory his names over the four quarters, exalted priest, loved one of the god Sin, the one who properly administers peoples and habitations with his just scepter" (Albert K. Grayson, *Assyrian Royal Inscriptions*, Vol. 1 [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1972] 118).

This royal inscription shares much of the language and themes of Psalm 23, yet the inscription is not dominated by its components (shepherds in green pastures) but by the central theme of the celebration of Tukulti-Ninurta's kingship. Laniak follows the majority of interpreters who consistently animate the components. There are passages such as Ezekiel 34 where the components are clearly to be animated but the issue of animating the components as an organizing principle remains problematic. In John 10, for example, should the components (wolf, hireling, etc.) be emphasized rather than the royal, messianic context? Surely the Palestinian wolf, a solitary animal weighing about twenty pounds and scarce in NT times, would hardly have occasioned the flight of any shepherd. Indeed, the narrative suggests that his audience heard him in royal/messianic terms when several months later (but in the same context) they asked him, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ (Messiah), tell us plainly" (John 10:24).

This problem of how to interpret the metaphor continues to present a challenge to interpreters. Another comment needs to be made in that those who are looking for information about "leadership in the Bible" will be surprised to find only several pages at the end of the book actually interact with that subject. The book seemed to come to a sudden end, and many readers will want more help in this area. Perhaps Laniak could write a companion volume and flesh out this "practical" area in more detail. He also provides a helpful translation of the various titles and epithets as listed in M.-J. Seux's *Epithetes royales akkadiennes et sumeriennes* but surprisingly omits the important volume by Knut Leonard Tallqvist, *Akkadische Götterepitheta*. He has an excellent bibliography that will serve readers and researchers well.

The book is published in the series *New Studies in Biblical Theology* (ed. D. A. Carson). This series focuses on three goals: (1) biblical theology; (2) exposition of a biblical book or corpus; (3) "the delineation of a biblical theme across all or part of the biblical corpora" (p. 11). The goal of books in this series, consequently, is to read the Bible as a unit (Biblical theology) and to avoid the sometimes "atomistic" tendencies of other methodologies. To be successful in such a broad task requires exceptional skill. Laniak has clearly demonstrated these skills, and the main purpose of this review is to affirm his success and to encourage others to read and enjoy the book.

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Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary. By C. John Collins. Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2006, 318 pp., \$18.00.

Given the ever-narrowing specialization in biblical studies and the complementary narrowing of focus we see in Bible commentaries, this work stands out as an experiment in integration that reflects the broad educational background and interests of its author. Collins holds advanced degrees in science and in theology that couple with his experience as an engineer, pastor, scholar, and seminary teacher. This unique blend shapes both the distinctiveness of his method and the manner of his presentation.

The commentary springs from the evangelical assumption that God has planted a theological message within the pages of the Bible that we may uncover through the careful process of exegesis. Thus Collins's goal for the early chapters of Genesis is to

rigorously investigate the text with a method of inquiry designed to provide the modern interpreter with “ancient literary competence” (p. 5). This method is outlined and defended in the second chapter of the book. It is a blend of several approaches whose joint consensus is used to determine the theology of the passage in question. It uses text linguistics to inquire into the meaningfulness of language patterns, distinguishing for example between verbs that are “on the storyline” vs. “off the storyline” (p. 9). His method continues with an application of literary criticism. He divides the text into “pericopes” (p. 20), identifying plot structure and peak moments within them, as well as observing the role of characterization, word repetition, and point of view. The raw material of this inquiry is assembled into a “literary-theological” (pp. 28–29) exposition of the pericope that is affirmed or expanded by seeking “reverberations” (pp. 30–31) in subsequent Christian and Jewish writings.

Following this introduction to method and a brief chapter (Chapter 3: “Genesis 1–4 in Its Literary Context”) that establishes the relationship between these chapters and the Pentateuch, the author dedicates four chapters to treatment of individual pericopes (1:1–2:3; 2:4–25; 3:1–24; 4:1–26). Each of these chapters follows the same outline: (A) Pericope Boundary, Structure, and Genre; (B) Translation and Notes; (C) Extra Notes; (D) Literary-Theological Exposition; and (E) Other Reverberations. The first section does exactly what the subtitle suggests, defending the segmentation of the text and discussing the genre of that pericope. The author then offers a translation of the Hebrew with copious footnotes attached. Those notes reflect a very close reading of the text, commenting on vocabulary and grammar choices as well as presenting the complementary or contrasting views of other scholars on the text. The third component of each chapter turns to topics raised within the text and frequently discussed by other commentators, for example: the image of God (pp. 61–67); the unusual nature of the seventh day (pp. 70–71); the nature of the first sin (p. 155); or the rejection of Cain’s sacrifice (pp. 199–200). The fourth section of these chapters deploys the various dimensions of narrative criticism in a bid to further extract the theological message of the pericope. Finally, the fifth section discusses “reverberations” of the material in the pericope within subsequent texts, for example the discussion of man and woman in 1 Cor 11:7–12 (pp. 141–42) and the allusion to Cain in Romans 7 (p. 220).

The four chapters that follow the literary-theological exploration of Genesis 1–4 read more like appendices. Chapter 8 takes up the matter of authorship, contrasting the Documentary Hypothesis with Mosaic authorship. Chapter 9 addresses the communicative purposes of Genesis 1–4. Chapter 10 draws on the author’s scientific background to discuss the relationship between the content of these early chapters in Genesis and the scientific theories that address similar subjects. Finally, chapter 11 both defines worldview in general and the worldview in particular communicated through the language of Genesis 1–4.

While the reader may not always agree with what Collins says, there will be no doubt as to what he is saying. The writing style is clear and very accessible. At times the author’s interaction with the Hebrew text and text linguistics assumes knowledge many readers would not have without Hebrew language skills. But most of the book remains very comprehensible for those without that background. The organization of the book is clear, and frequent subheadings help create visual appeal. (A notable exception are the Literary-Theological Exposition segments, where increased use of subheads would have been helpful.)

Collins presents a convincing case that Genesis 1–4 provides an important foundation for the reading of the rest of the Pentateuch as well as the Bible itself. The reader also leaves convinced that Collins’s integrated approach has merit, and valuable insights were generated by each component of his analysis. But what is gained in such a project in breadth is lost in depth. At times I felt the author longing for the opportunity to press

into a more sustained discussion. So while it will not be the only commentary needed to expose the literary-theological dimension of Genesis 1–4, its price and helpful contribution will bring it to many a pastor's and scholar's shelf.

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Ruth. By John R. Wilch. St. Louis: Concordia, 2006, xl + 418 pp., \$42.99.

This devotional commentary by John Wilch is thorough and detailed, and it is clear that Wilch has command of the secondary literature in English and German. The book is part of the Concordia Commentary series, which is confessional. More specifically, the series is Lutheran, evangelical, and committed to the verbal inspiration of Scripture. Above all, it views “the present application and fulfillment of the text in terms of Jesus Christ and his corporate church” (p. xii). In his preface, Wilch confirms his commitment to these characteristics, and he follows them throughout the commentary. For example, he states that the married women in this story demonstrated faithfulness: “All this is in accord with the Christian doctrine of marriage as a holy vocation” (p. 36). The description of marriage as a holy vocation is a specifically Lutheran formulation, and Wilch provides the reader with references to the Apology of the Augsburg Confession and the Large Catechism of Martin Luther on the topic of marriage.

The 107-page introduction includes the following sections: Story; Setting; Text; Purpose; Motifs; Theology; and Relevance. In each of these sections, Wilch sets the book of Ruth within a broader context. For example, in the section on motifs, Wilch argues that fidelity is “the primary motif in the book of Ruth” (p. 34), and the faithful characters in the book of Ruth provide examples of sacrifice for faithful Christians. “Jesus calls all of us who follow him to sacrifice ourselves for his sake (Mt 10:37–38; 16:24–25), which includes making sacrifices for those in need (Mt 25:34–40)” (pp. 33–34). Similar devotional comments occur in both the introduction and the commentary proper.

After the introduction, Wilch presents the four chapters of Ruth as four acts, each having two scenes. (Wilch nowhere suggests that Ruth was written for performance, but he does not explain why he uses the terminology of drama.) For each scene Wilch provides his own translation and textual notes. The translation is faithful to the Hebrew and yet in good English. The textual notes are thorough and technical, averaging one page per verse. In many cases, Wilch provides a complete parsing of the verbal forms and detailed explanations of basic grammatical constructions. Hebraists will find some of it elementary or redundant, but busy pastors might be able to use it to maintain their language skills. In addition, the Hebrew text was apparently included by cutting and pasting it from an electronic copy of BHS. Having the Hebrew text may be helpful for those who want to use the commentary without having their Hebrew Bible open.

For the most part, the detailed textual notes are excellent, but in a few cases the notes do not help the reader gain a better understanding of the book of Ruth. For example, Wilch comments that “the wording in Ruth 1:9b–10a, including a series of feminine verbs, displays alliteration” (p. 135). Since the actors are feminine, the author had no other choice but to use feminine verbs, and thus the alliteration would be unavoidable. In a discussion of the preposition “with” (עִם) Wilch comments that it “can indicate ‘fellowship and companionship’ . . . or ‘advantage’” (p. 192). This sort of freight cannot be carried by a preposition alone.

In the commentary proper, Wilch includes some speculation that may help stimulate the reader's thinking. For example, Ruth “probably noticed a certain civility in the

demeanor of the foreman, for she was at least permitted to glean until the owner arrived" (p. 211). Perhaps she did notice something. Another example, "Boaz's field was also likely not too large nor the workers and other gleaners too many for everyone to have been within earshot" (p. 217). Regarding the night scene when Ruth approaches Boaz, Wilch states, "Naturally, he will have conducted his interrogation in a whisper so as not to make matters embarrassing by arousing others through loud talk" (p. 285).

Most of the examples listed above and in the book are harmless, but in a few cases I begin to wonder what principles were guiding the author's path from interpretation to theology and application. For example, scholars have long noted the betrothal scene in chapter 2 and its importance for the book. Wilch describes the betrothal scene and then continues, "The whole book of Ruth may be termed a Christotelic betrothal scene" (p. 248). Apparently, his reason for labeling it "Christotelic" is that David, an ancestor of Christ, has no betrothal scene in Scripture. "Within the canon as a whole, it appears that the account of Boaz and Ruth is a substitute for what their greater descendant lacked" (p. 249). Following the comments about David, Wilch includes an entire paragraph on Jesus turning the makings of a betrothal scene with the Samaritan woman "into an evangelistic opportunity" (p. 249). The paragraph has no connection with the book of Ruth except for the topic of marriage, and I am left wondering what "Christotelic" entails. Is any random connection between different people in the lineage of Jesus "Christotelic?"

John Wilch does a thorough job of interpreting the book of Ruth—so thorough that it leaves almost nothing for the reader to ponder. There is a wealth of homiletical material for pastors. It is rich with data on the Hebrew text for beginning students. There are lengthy theological discussions for those who share the evangelical Lutheran perspective of the author. Despite the book's strengths, the lack of clear principles of interpretation somewhat undermines its value.

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1 Chronicles. By Ralph W. Klein. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2006, xxi + 562 pp., \$55.00.

1 Chronicles is a valuable addition to the Hermeneia series. The series intends to be a critical and historical commentary on the Bible. This volume demonstrates these concerns with attention given to textual criticism and literary matters along with the anticipated historical-critical remarks and careful reconstructions of the historical setting. Klein's comments reflect his careful study of 1 Chronicles over the past several years.

The side-by-side column format of the volume (familiar to readers of other Hermeneia volumes) not only looks more attractive, but also provides the best layout for presenting the careful textual notes that accompany Klein's translation. The textual notes are a veritable treasure of variant word forms, alternate readings, and comments on the comparative manuscripts from the Septuagint or 4QSam or the Masoretic text. After the section on translation and textual notes, Klein provides a section on "Structure," which serves as an overview for the focus passage. He then includes "Detailed Commentary" to provide his particular insights on a given passage. This section follows the outline of the "Structure" section and provides a verse-by-verse exposition of the text. Klein typically groups key phrases for his comments, providing fluidity for his narrative while still allowing close comments on the text. The detailed commentary is comple-

mented by footnotes replete with thorough secondary references. Klein also places his detailed interactions with the secondary material in the footnotes, preserving the narrative flow of the main body. The formatting of the commentary allows a place for the components of a scholarly commentary while achieving a readability that surpasses many of its literary peers.

Klein's attention to the historical details of the biblical text is demonstrated in his 230 pages dedicated to the genealogical material of 1 Chronicles 1–9. An example of how he deals with textual and historical questions can be drawn from his comments on chapter 1. Klein notes that many scholars attribute all or parts of 1 Chronicles 1 to secondary sources, i.e. later additions. Klein ascribes the entire chapter to the Chronicler because of the close similarities of the materials with the *Vorlage* of Genesis with alternating pattern of linear and segmented genealogies. In addition, he changes the Chronicler makes to his Genesis *Vorlage* relate to making a theological point; for example, the reversal of the order of the sons of Ishmael and Keturah occurs because the Chronicler intends to prioritize the descendants of Abraham. Then, in an attempt to address historical questions, Klein provides historical and geographical information on the various tribes of the descendants of Ishmael and Keturah. He also provides helpful overview flow charts and tables throughout the genealogical material.

Roughly half the commentary is dedicated to the material of 1 Chronicles 10–29. The primary literary form of this material is narrative, and Klein provides less in the way of historical reconstruction and more in the way of theological insight. However, the differences between the first half and second half of the commentary can be described as a differing emphasis based on the biblical material rather than as a direct contrast within the author's approach. Chapter 14 provides a prime example of how Klein manages the narrative material of 1 Chronicles.

In his comments on chapter 14, Klein demonstrates his insights into the differences between the Chronicler's text and his *Vorlage* of Samuel. Klein notes that in the presentation of the events the Chronicler is motivated by "literary or theological reasons" not presenting "historical reality." According to Klein, the Chronicler intends to contrast Saul (not seeking the ark) and David ("the ark seeker") and to show the blessings of David's faithfulness. Klein continues, "The new literary position for the two battles against Philistines" focuses attention on Jerusalem and allows for the ark's peaceful entry into Jerusalem (p. 339). Klein's comments conclude with some final observations about the theological and literary purposes of the Chronicler depicted in word revisions, reordering of the narrative events, and the additions of narration to the Samuel text such as in 1 Chr 14:15–17.

Klein provides some insight on the enigmatic statement of 1 Chr 21:1 of Satan inciting David to number the people of Israel. Klein, contra Sailhamer and Wright, proposes that the Chronicler uses "Satan" as the spiritual archenemy, not simply a human adversary. The Chronicler thus provides further reasoning for David's digression from his typical practice of trusting the Lord for military achievement. Klein also indicates that David puts the entire nation at risk by not relying on the Lord.

Klein holds that the Chronicler's interest in 1 Chronicles 17 (the Davidic promise) is clearly on Solomon. He argues that the omission of the statement about committing iniquity in 2 Sam 7:14b from the Chronicles narrative is an effort to present Solomon as the recipient of the divine promise. Solomon will be the recipient of the divine kingdom and will be the son of the Lord based on the "adoption formula" (p. 381).

Some readers may find it puzzling that with all of Klein's interaction with secondary sources that he does not interact more with the messianic interpretations of 1 Chronicles 17 that have been offered by Christian interpreters throughout history. Even if Klein's interpretation limits the Chronicler's focus to Solomon, one would still anticipate some indication of the rich discussion of this text with a view to messianic themes.

As Klein does not comment on any messianic images in chapter 17, the reader should not be surprised that messianic themes do not figure prominently in Klein's proposals for the main purposes of 1 Chronicles. Klein gives little room for the Messiah as an abiding interest for the Chronicler. In fact, he even wonders if the Chronicler retains a more subdued hope in a restoration of the monarchy (p. 48).

Klein's thorough work clarifies the various verbal and literary techniques that the Chronicler uses to reveal his interests in Israel, the temple cult, and the Davidic kingship. Through reordering the source material, careful choice of synonyms, and inserting key phrases and observations, the Chronicler has given insightful commentary on the books of the Hebrew Bible from Genesis to Kings. Klein's commentary alerts the reader to many of these devices and provides a cogent assessment of how the Chronicler constructs his intended meaning.

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Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures. By Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wodden, eds. SBLSCS 53. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006, xv + 414 pp., \$49.95 paper.

The field of Septuagint studies has been growing over the last few decades, as several new issues have arisen. This edited volume, then, is a much needed work that addresses many of these recent issues. The book comprises twenty-one essays written by Septuagint scholars from around the world, many from Continental Europe and North America. Most of the authors are involved in the two major LXX translation projects: the *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (NETS) and *Septuaginta-deutsch* (LXX.D). All the essays were originally presented as papers at a Septuagint studies conference in September 2002 at Bangor Theological Seminary. The volume is structured in four parts: (1) "Prolegomena concerning the LXX as Translation and/or Interpretation"; (2) "Issues concerning Individual LXX Books" (including articles on Genesis, OG Joshua, 2 Esdras, OG Job 1:8b, Amos, and OG/LXX Zech 1-6); (3) "Comprehensive Issues and Problems concerning Several LXX Books"; and (4) "Reception History of the LXX in Early Judaism and Christianity." While many of the articles are written very clearly, much clearer than I had expected, the topic itself is complex, making the volume suitable only for those who are fairly acquainted with the issues and technical language of Septuagint studies. (I would not recommend this book to someone with very little or no prior knowledge of the subject.)

Instead of commenting briefly on each essay, I will say a general word about each of the four sections in the book. The first section, "Prolegomena," was to my mind the most helpful. The four essays written here explore the nature of the Septuagint translation, namely, whether the LXX was intended to be an independent literary work or a translation always dependant and subservient to the original Hebrew (see esp. pp. 22-25, 64-70). The debate is well known, and the authors give an astute analysis. The articles by Boyd-Taylor ("In a Mirror Dimly") and Pietersma ("Exegesis in the Septuagint") give a good overview of the issue. Ben Wright ("Translation as Scripture") argues that based on Philo and the *Letter of Aristeas*, the Septuagint began as a translation but later functioned as an independent literary work (esp. pp. 53-57). Overall, the essays in this section were very clear and could benefit someone who wants to go beyond what is said in the standard introductions concerning the nature of Septuagint translation.

The next section, devoted to individual LXX books, was much more technical. A large portion of these essays consists of word studies, large blocks of Hebrew/Greek texts, and lengthy lists of Greek words and references. This in no way detracts from the quality of the essays; they were all well argued. However, the essays in this section demand a very slow reading in order to digest all the data.

The next section, "Comprehensive Issues," brings us back to the more general issues in Septuagint studies. This section deals in particular with issues or themes that involve more than one book. Two essays here may be highlighted. First, Siegfried Kreuzer's article ("From 'Old Greek' to the Recensions: Who and What Caused the Change of the Hebrew Reference Text of the Septuagint") was written with extreme clarity. This essay gives a good overview of the three different Hebrew text types in the late Second Temple period, and argues that the proto-MT arose out of the Hasmonean dynasty. This text-type was preserved because its supporters, the Pharisees, largely survived the aftermath of AD 70. Also worthy of mention is Martin Rösel's article ("Toward a 'Theology of the Septuagint'"). Rösel argues that there are enough unifying features in the LXX to suggest the possibility of writing a "Theology of the Septuagint," not merely of individual books but of the whole Greek Bible. He looks at themes such as the image of God in the LXX (God is the "God of the inhabited earth") compared to the MT (God is the "God of Israel") to show that some themes are treated with relative uniformity throughout the Greek Bible. His sketch is preliminary, though intriguing nonetheless.

The last section, "Reception History," looks again at individual books, this time mostly from the point of view of early Christianity. Topics such as the LXX in the letters of Paul, the LXX in 1 Peter, and the LXX in Hebrews receive attention. I found these articles a bit less technical, and hence more readable, than the individual book studies in section 2.

In all, this book is a very helpful contribution to the field of Septuagint studies. Although not suitable for the introductory reader, the volume certainly will be embraced by those who have gained an interest in this growing field.

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Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament. Edited by Stanley E. Porter. McMaster New Testament Studies. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xiii + 316 pp., \$29.00 paper.

In his 1997 essay "The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology" (in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel* [ed. Craig A. Evans and James A. Sanders; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997] 79–96), Stanley E. Porter lamented the wide range of terminology used by scholars to explain the way in which the NT writers appropriated the OT. In fact, Porter used the words "simply astounding" (p. 80) to describe the lack of scholarly consensus regarding the terminology one should use when describing the NT writers' use of the OT. To illustrate this, on page 80 of this same essay, Porter listed some of the terms that he had observed scholars using: citation, direct quotation, formal quotation, indirect quotation, allusive quotation, allusion, paraphrase, exegesis, midrash, typology, reminiscence, echo, intertextuality, influence, and even tradition.

The 2003 H. H. Bingham Colloquium in New Testament at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada—where Porter is president, dean, and professor of New Testament—attempted to tackle the issue of terminology as well as a host of

related issues connected with the use of the OT in the NT. The papers delivered at this colloquium by ten distinguished scholars were edited by Porter and are now available in book form under the title *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament*.

The first two chapters of *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* deal with methodological issues. The first chapter, by Dennis L. Stamps, explores how the NT writers employed the OT rhetorically. Did the NT writers employ Jewish forms of persuasion in their use of the OT or did they employ Hellenistic forms of persuasion based on Hellenistic assumptions in their use of the OT? Stamps proposes the latter, a perspective with which those who emphasize the Jewishness of the NT writers would disagree. The second chapter, by R. Timothy McLay, explores the question of what was considered Scripture by the NT church. He concludes that there was no such thing as a canon with regard to the OT for the NT writers. Instead, there was fluidity within Judaism regarding the collections of Hebrew sacred writings that they claimed as authoritative. In this discussion, however, McLay does not interact with those who have proposed a closed canon in the second century BC, which includes such noted scholars as E. E. Ellis.

The next eight chapters essentially explore the use of the OT in the NT by corpus. There is a chapter that explores the use of the OT in Matthew (Michael P. Knowles), Mark (Craig A. Evans), Luke-Acts (Stanley E. Porter), John, (Paul Miller), Paul's major epistles (James W. Aageson), Paul's shorter epistles (Sylvia C. Keesmaat), and James (Kurt Anders Richardson). Finally, Andreas J. Köstenberger contributed a "catch-all" chapter that explores the use of the OT in the Pastoral Epistles, the General Epistles, and the Book of Revelation.

Concluding the book is a critical response to each of the ten chapters listed above by Andreas J. Köstenberger, entitled "Hearing the Old Testament in the New: A Response." Because of space limitations, I cannot review each essay. Rather, I will suggest some of the strengths and weaknesses of this collection of essays.

The issues are wide and the implications are deep for the topic of the NT's use of the OT. This makes a serious exploration of it on the one hand essential but on the other hand daunting. Because of this reality, it is difficult to say how successful or unsuccessful *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament* really is in terms of propelling the scholarly conversation forward.

At some points in the book, I perceived that the assignments given to some of the colloquium participants were much too broad and as a result their contributions could not give adequate justice to the topic. For example, Köstenberger's chapter on the use of the OT in the Pastoral and General Epistles and the Book of Revelation was clearly much too broad. Those familiar with the Book of Revelation, and in particular G. K. Beale's work on the Book of Revelation, know how steeped in OT imagery and allusion the Apocalypse is. In addition, Hebrews has its own characteristics in the ways in which it appropriates the OT. Köstenberger, being the well-respected and able scholar that he is, recognizes the challenging nature of his task and states as much in the opening paragraph of his treatment (p. 230). In the end, he is quite able to summarize some important tendencies.

At other points in the book, there are flashes of brilliance and even some fresh ideas. At least three of the essays are worthy of note in this regard. First, Craig Evans has suggested, in Köstenberger's words, a "provocative and original hypothesis" (p. 270) that the writer of Mark wrote to challenge a Jewish first-century perspective that Emperor Vespasian was the fulfillment of OT prophecy by presenting Jesus Christ as the true Savior of the world. Evans's proposal is quite interesting and deserves further exploration. Second, Porter's excellent essay on the use of the OT in Luke-Acts is a superior argument for the view that Luke-Acts utilized the OT primarily as an apologetic for the missions of Jesus and his disciples. To do so, Porter explores, among other texts, the use

of Isa 61:1–2 in Luke 4:18–19. Porter's argument is so clear and appealing that scholars studying the purpose of Luke may want to interact with this essay as an excellent representation of the "apologetic" view of Luke-Acts. Third, Kurt Anders Richardson's essay titled "Job as Exemplar in the Epistle of James" is a fascinating study. The only mention of Job in the NT is in James. According to Richardson, James appropriated Job as a key representative of humility and patient endurance in the face of suffering and thus served as an example to persecuted believers in the first century AD. This essay will serve as a helpful resource for pastors because of the natural homiletical connections. Also, scholars writing commentaries on James must interact with this important essay.

Perhaps the most controversial chapter in the book is Sylvia C. Keesmaat's essay "In the Face of the Empire," in which she proposes reading Paul's shorter epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon) through the lens of Empire, as a challenge to the legitimacy of the Roman Empire in which they were written. Keesmaat's essay explores the use of some of the royal psalms by Paul in his shorter letters to establish Christ's kingship over the Roman emperor. At the end of this essay she proposes how Christians should challenge the empire of our day (i.e. American capitalism and its effects).

Köstenberger's closing response to each of the essays is insightful and incisive. He is gracious, as well as to the point, in his critique of each essay.

Because of the wide range of issues discussed in this collection of essays and because of the attempt to cover the entire NT, this book may serve as a helpful resource. While it does not bring to resolution the issues of terminology and approach initially raised by Porter, and in some regards the disparate approaches of the scholars in this book serve as an illustration of the frustrations that Porter has raised in the past, it offers enough interesting insight to be worthy of one's library. It might sit alongside similar collections of essays on the topic of the use of the OT in the NT, such as D. A. Carson's and H. G. M. Williamson's edited work *It is Written: Scripture Citing Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) and G. K. Beale's edited work *The Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994).

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Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis. By Hans-Josef Klauck. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006, xxxv + 504 pp., \$34.95 paper.

Professor Klauck, the Naomi Shenstone Donnelley Professor of New Testament and Early Christian Literature at the University of Chicago, has given us an expanded and updated English translation of his wonderful 1998 German textbook. Embarrassingly, a copy of his original book came into my hands during the page proofs of my last book on letter writing. I was able to slip in only the most token of nods to this book that deserved far more attention. I am grateful for this small chance to remediate.

While my little textbook is designed for late college or early graduate school, Klauck's work is clearly targeting the more serious and advanced student. At twice the length of a typical textbook, he gets more than twice the utility. Klauck gives readers access to extensive amounts of primary (and relevant) source material, providing the Greek text (less commonly the Latin text) of a letter when useful and always with an English translation. Klauck carefully guides the reader, sometimes going line by Greek line through an ancient source, mining it as a modern commentary might a NT letter (e.g. Claudius's letter to the Alexandrians, *PLond.* VI.1912, on pp. 83–100). This is the best

study of Greco-Roman epistolography currently available to NT scholars, supplanting (in my opinion) Otto Roller's work (*Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe* [Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933]).

Any review should include a brief summary, although scanning his table of contents tells as much. Klauck begins by quoting Dickens to remind us how seriously ancients (up to the mid-1800s) took the sending and receiving of letters and Kafka to remind us also that letters were more than "half a conversation," since letters allowed thoughtful re-reading and reflection (pp. 2–4)—an excellent and often overlooked point. As an introduction (and illustration of what will become the pedagogical approach of this book), Klauck cites two short papyrus (Egyptian) letters (second century AD). A detailed analysis (9 pages) of these two letters segues into a description of the basic components of an ancient Greco-Roman letter (no surprises there), ending with a parallel treatment of two NT letters (2–3 John), showing well the similarities. Having demonstrated the usefulness of this approach, Klauck then repeats it on a much larger scale. After a brief summary of writing materials, secretaries, and postal systems (chap. 2), Klauck examines recommendation and royal/imperial letters (chap. 3), literary letters (chap. 4), epistolary theorists (chap. 5), and early Jewish letters (chap. 6). The results of this extensive analysis are then applied to the NT, first in an overview (chap. 7) and then with select texts (chap. 8), namely 1–2 Thessalonians (53 pages), 2 Peter (11 pages), Acts 15:23–29 (10 pages), and Acts 23:26–30 (6 pages). A brief epilogue (9 pages) mentions but does not analyze 1–2 Clement, the Apostolic Fathers, the NT apocrypha, the Nag Hammadi codices, and the Church fathers.

At every place one opens the book (e.g. Klauck's description of ancient epistolary theorists, pp. 183–206), one finds an excellent review of scholarship on the topic (such as the pseudonymous nature of both Demetrius of Phaleron, *On Style*, and Pseudo-Demetrius, *Epistolary Types*, pp. 194–95) and significant excerpts from the works (with appropriate notation of scholarly discussion of those texts, e.g. Aune on Pseudo-Libanius, p. 203, n. 20). The discussion then ends with an exercise guiding the reader to do similarly with a parallel text, in this case, Philostratus of Lemnos, *De epistulis* (pp. 205–6).

The original German subtitle, *Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*, is more accurate, since this text includes well-chosen "exercises" to allow the reader or student to put into practice what has just been read. Most chapter subsections end with an "exercise," 54 exercises in all (e.g. following a discussion of the Cynic Epistles, three excerpts [Diog. Laert. 6.96–97; Diog. *Ep.* 3; Crates *Ep.* 32] allow the reader to look for the typical Cynic elements, pp. 181–82). This feature makes the book (in spite of its length) an excellent choice for a graduate (likely doctoral) textbook. (It is much too detailed for most undergraduates.) At the end of the book, Klauck provides an "Answer Key" for each exercise. Not merely "solutions," these are the sort of "follow-up explanations" a good professor would make after hearing a student's answer, complete with additional bibliography and citation of supplementary material.

While Klauck's grasp of ancient epistolary convention is amazing, little here is novel. (He uses "postscript" for what others commonly call the letter closing and "addendum" for what others refer to as a postscript, p. 38, but this is merely nomenclature.) The true strength is the breadth and completeness of the work. For example, it is often noted Paul modified the typical greeting (*chairein*) to "grace and peace." Klauck gives the best explanation that I have heard for why the infinitival form is used (pp. 18–19). He then notes that, while Paul's form is unique, modifying the *chairein* greeting was not (pp. 20–21; see Plato, Epicurus, and bereavement letters). Although there are few surprises, the reader has many "aha!" moments. It is an outstanding piece of scholarship.

Klauck does argue (against the trend) for Deissmann's distinction between purely occasioned and literary letters. (To these he adds a third: diplomatic [royal/imperial] letters.) Klauck follows R. E. Brown, who says Deissmann's categories are still valid as

long as one allows for “transitional categories” (p. 70). This produces more of a sliding scale with *Briefe* and *Episteln* marking the endpoints. I agree, but does such a description offer any real help in categorizing Paul’s letters?

Whenever a textbook provides many examples in great detail, it is easy to critique that *occasionally* some examples provide more detail than even an advanced graduate text merits. I shall fall prey to that temptation. For example, his argument (pp. 96–99) over the reading of an emendation in a text (complete with a dispute over itacisms) is perhaps too much. A summary of his conclusions (which I support) was likely adequate. I must resort to such a petty example in a feeble attempt to find anything to critique in this splendid book, since truly the detailed analyses of the excerpts are the greatest strength of the work. Readers can read for themselves ancient material normally summarized in other textbooks.

The general bibliography, broken down by topic (text collections, Greco-Roman letters, early Jewish, early Christian, ancient rhetoric, papyrology, etc.) demonstrates Klauck’s premier command of the material, which he further complements with additional bibliographies specific to each subchapter (such as the thirteen entries on “Letter Styles and Topoi,” pp. 183–84, or the seven just on the “collection” of the Catholic Epistles, pp. 346–47). The extensive table of contents is a life-saver allowing one to locate easily all bibliographies (including the embedded ones), exercises, 9 pages of abbreviations, and three indices (subject [with about 600 entries], ancient sources, and modern authors).

Lastly, for such a technical piece, it reads quite well, with a remarkably clean text. Baylor University Press must be commended for a meticulous job, and Carey Newman should be thanked for encouraging this wonderful English edition.

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Seeing the Word: Refocusing New Testament Study. By Markus Bockmuehl. Studies in Theological Interpretation. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 297 pp., \$21.99 paper.

The last decade or so has witnessed a growing pressure for increased theological engagement with Scripture, and one of the fruits of this movement is the launching by Baker Academic of the present series—Studies in Theological Interpretation, edited by Craig Bartholomew, Joel Green, and Christopher Seitz. Each of the aforementioned, along with a number of other major figures—one thinks of NT scholars Francis Watson and Richard Hays, as well as theologians such as John Webster and Kevin Vanhoozer—have sought to rejoin, or at least to bring into conversation, the disciplines of biblical studies and systematic theology in service to the church of Jesus Christ. This volume by Markus Bockmuehl, late of both Cambridge and St. Andrews, soon to arrive at Oxford, is the first in a series that “is dedicated to the pursuit of constructive theological interpretation of the church’s inheritance of prophets and apostles in a manner that is open to reconnection with the long history of theological reading in the church” (p. 7).

Bockmuehl inaugurates his volume with a discussion of Simon Marmion’s miniature of *St. Luke Painting the Virgin and Child*, produced in the 1640s. The painting is a depiction of Luke as artist, with Mary holding the baby Jesus. In the painting, the depiction of Mary holding the baby appears rather unremarkable—signifying the historical and cultural aspects of normal human experience in the world. Yet in Luke’s portrait, the relative postures of Mary and baby are slightly different; they are interpreted rather than merely reproduced. Luke’s portrait, however, is not a fabrication or a fiction but

is rather the product of keen observation and truthful representation (p. 18). Luke “offers not photographic imitation but the exposition of his subject’s deeper significance and relational substance” (p. 19). Bockmuehl uses this painting within a painting to introduce the conundrum that lies before contemporary biblical interpreters: “how can biblical scholars do justice to historically and culturally contingent human figures like Jesus of Nazareth or his apostle Paul of Tarsus—and yet make sense of the texts’ insistence on these same figures as, respectively, ‘Son of God’ or divinely appointed apostolic witnesses?” (p. 20). How do biblical interpreters do justice to both the human and enculturated aspects of NT texts, while at the same time speaking properly about the divine truths to which these texts bear testimony? While these questions have a long history, they have not gone away despite two and a half centuries of post-enlightenment exegesis. Bockmuehl’s burden in this book is to find a way for interpreters of any and all conviction to “derive benefit from the rediscovery that adequate—that is, object-appropriate—interpretation of [the NT] is bound to resemble Marmion’s task of portraying an evangelist painting Mary of Nazareth as the Mother of God” (p. 21).

Bockmuehl begins by surveying the current state of NT scholarship, finding that it is in disarray, unable to determine either agreed-upon methods of study or, quite alarmingly, the subject matter under investigation (p. 38). The guild has become so fractured and aimless that it is a discipline in search of an identity. This is reflected in the deluge of new books that are published every year by academic presses, few of which have any clear contribution to make to the field, reflecting a variety of (often conflicting or mutually incompatible) methodologies. It is impossible, of course, to keep up with this outpouring of new material, but it is equally unclear as to just what one is missing if such works are left unread.

Bockmuehl mentions several attempts to reverse this unfortunate situation: a renewed historicism, reflected in the work of scholars such as Martin Hengel, Gerd Theissen, and N. T. Wright; final form literary approaches, such as rhetorical studies of NT texts (and here Bockmuehl drops one of his sparkling quotes: NT “texts in any case do not present *themselves* as concerned with either literature or rhetoric. To view them primarily [rather than *en passant*] in this fashion is rather like using a stethoscope to examine a lightbulb: it can be done and does produce unfamiliar results, but it offers an analysis that does justice neither to the object nor to the instrument” [p. 49]); ideology and self-deconstruction; theological interpretation; and the increasing focus on community-based hermeneutics. Each of these, while containing something or other that holds some measure of promise, ultimately falls short of lifting NT scholarship from its current malaise. Bockmuehl here introduces his two-fold proposal for the way forward. First, he sees immense promise in the study of the “effective history” of the NT—how the NT was heard and heeded in the first several generations of the church. Second, given the assumption of authority inherent in the text of the NT and that it does indeed imply a certain audience, Bockmuehl calls for an increased focus on the implied readership of the NT.

The remainder of the book is an elaboration of these two methodologies, drawing out just what these might look like in practice. In chapter 2, Bockmuehl develops what he calls the wisdom of the implied exegete, sketching the sort of posture toward the text of Scripture that the wise interpreter will adopt. A proper reading of the NT “requires one to take seriously where it resides, whom it addresses, and of what it speaks” (p. 90). Such a sympathetic, submissive, and obedient posture toward the text leads to the recognition that Scripture reveals “the Word of life for the people of God” (p. 91). Interpreters will find that “the meaning of the sacred text is understood not primarily by intellectual genius or once-and-for-all scientific dissection, but by the interplay of divine gift with human welcome and delight” (p. 91). Of course, Bockmuehl is not calling for anti-intellectual interpretive strategies but for a vigorous employment of reason, along

with “a Christ-shaped transformation of our minds” for the discernment and embracing of the will of God (p. 79).

Chapters 3 and 4 draw out how such an interpretive approach might look when compared to a typical historical-critical treatment of the relationship between the apostles Peter and Paul. While the conflict model between these two figures reigned supreme since Baur, a more sympathetic approach would yield an appreciation for the unity of the gospel despite the diversity of witnesses to that one gospel. Bockmuehl then gives a personal and historical sketch of what his model exegete might look like in his treatment in chapter 5 of E. C. Hoskyns, the Cambridge NT scholar who sought to traverse the “sacred” chasm between scholarship and orthodox ecclesial commitment. Bockmuehl’s case becomes especially gripping and intensely personal at this point, especially for those who have seen up close how it is that “postwar liberal criticism won the day, made its point, and ran its course” (p. 159). The lesson here is that “[d]eliberate critical detachment from hermeneutical and liturgical disciplines of faith seeking understanding can produce, almost by definition, no spiritual grandchildren” (p. 159).

Quite obviously, much more can be said about Bockmuehl’s case, but while it is aimed at the broader guild of NT scholarship, it will greatly repay a careful reading by evangelical biblical and theological scholars. While evangelicals may be tempted to think that they are not in danger of overly objective or detached readings of Scripture, they are fools who think themselves beyond the exhortation toward a more humble and submissive posture before the always devastating and always redeeming Word of life.

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Jesus People: The Historical Jesus and the Beginnings of Community. By David Catchpole. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, xiii + 325 pp., \$29.99 paper.

Originally a series of Lent addresses at Wells Cathedral in 2003, the six chapters of Catchpole’s book deal with a wide variety of topics of interest for those studying the historical Jesus. As with his earlier *Resurrection People* (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys, 2002), his goal is to present the study of the historical Jesus to as broad an audience as possible, including both scholar and layperson. Catchpole is aware this is a rather lofty goal given the amount of historical-critical material he covers in each chapter. This is especially true for the present volume since Catchpole assumes a great deal of his audience with respect to method.

Catchpole’s method consists of determining as much as possible the original words of Jesus. This necessarily requires a number of assumptions with respect to the Synoptic problem, which simply cannot be argued in a book of this type. While the “scaffolding of the historian’s work” is laid in little more than a page (pp. 3–4), the outworking of this groundwork is found throughout the work. Catchpole deals with the sayings of Jesus by employing several of the standard “criteria of authenticity” as well, noting both the strengths and weaknesses of these criteria (pp. 55–60). He is clear that all of the sayings of Jesus come to us through the believing members of a post-Easter community and as such need to be weighed carefully. He warns against the overly enthusiastic acceptance of oral traditions about Jesus (represented by N. T. Wright) and the overly skeptical dismissal of nearly all the traditions (represented by Marcus Borg). Catchpole’s middle course between the two results in a prophetic Jesus in the tradition of Jeremiah. Jesus provides a critique of Judaism, Torah, and temple from within the traditions of Second Temple Judaism rather than as a radical departure from them. Catchpole attempts to

chart a course between the construction of a Jesus who is too radical in his condemnation of the temple and the contention of those who see the temple traditions as late additions from the early church.

By determining the original form of the sayings, Catchpole sets the redactional activity of the authors of the Gospels in a clear light. This is especially evident in his chapters on the Lord's prayer (chap. 3) and the eschatology of Jesus (chap. 5). For Catchpole, this redactional activity is the reflection of the resurrection community on the words and deeds of the historical Jesus and, as such, sets a trajectory for the present resurrection community to continue the work of applying the words and deeds of the historical Jesus. The applications of the text at the conclusion of the various chapters demonstrate Catchpole's pastoral heart and serve as the most appealing part of the work to the non-academic reader.

The first chapter deals with John the Baptist as a predecessor of Jesus. John and his following are described as an open, penitential group that existed to contribute to the renewal of Israel's righteousness (p. 15). As such, John is certainly in the tradition of the prophet of the Hebrew Bible. He is not a "revolutionary" as he is sometimes portrayed (p. 33), nor is he part of an "implicit anti-temple movement" (p. 39). John's emphasis on repentance and baptism, furthermore, is important for the post-resurrection community, since these two themes are prominent in Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2:42).

Catchpole details Jesus' method of "one-on-one" discipleship in his second chapter. Jesus calls people into a new life and a new labor by entering voluntarily into a "precarious and dependant situation" (p. 72). Catchpole devotes most of this section to table fellowship, often seen as a significant element of Jesus' mission. Those who respond to Jesus are made full partners in table fellowship, defying popular boundary markers in first-century Judaism. Table fellowship is not a call to a new society, but rather it is described as a "new family." If Jesus is creating a new family in which all participants are equal, how do we explain the preference shown to the twelve in general or Peter in particular? Here Catchpole detects the voice of Matthew, writing from Antioch where Peter's theology had become dominant. Matthew 16:17 is therefore a post-resurrection voice reflecting on Peter's leadership among the disciples. The twelve were not a threat to the new family; they were simply more committed to Jesus' mission than most who responded to Jesus.

Chapter 3 concerns prayer and deals primarily with the Lord's prayer. Here Catchpole's method is clear. He spends several pages dealing with redaction criticism of the "model prayer" in order to determine the most likely wording of the historical Jesus. He ends up with five key themes: divine parenthood, hope for a new world, coping with hunger, forgiveness of sin, and persecution. He then explains how these themes would have been understood within the mission of Jesus by showing parallels to other Second Temple literature as well as several parables of Jesus. Each of these themes are ultimately intelligible in the itinerant mission of Jesus to the Jews, yet can be understood by the resurrection community with subtle modifications. He therefore seeks to bridge a perceived gap between the words of Jesus and the present state of the post-Easter community.

In chapter 4 Catchpole examines several "polarities" that existed in the Second Temple period, for example, Jews and Gentiles. The classic passage for Jesus' relationship to Gentiles is Mark 7:24–30, the healing of the Syrophenician woman's daughter. Catchpole notes well the socio-political dimensions of this story. The Gentiles of Tyre were especially hated by the Jews of Galilee. Yet there is nothing in this story, according to Catchpole, that could be taken as "transcending Jewish particularism." Instead, Jesus stands solidly in the tradition of the Second Temple period. On Jews and Samaritans, Jesus confronts the "polarities of Israel's situation" more clearly by making a Samaritan

a positive character in a parable. A third polarity concerns the Pharisees and the perceived antithesis between Jesus and the Pharisees. This antithesis is not, according to Catchpole, supported by the text. On Sabbath, food laws, and tithes, Jesus demonstrates a clear respect for the Law of Moses and stands within the tradition of the prophetic critique of the contemporary Judaism. This chapter deals with economic and gender polarities as well. It is well known that Jesus sided with the poor and the outcast and dealt with women in a fashion that was quite remarkable for the period. In all of these so-called polarities, Catchpole emphasizes that Jesus' mission was to affirm the "wholeness of the people of God," despite the fact his mission was to the Jewish people. It is only after Easter and the "programme and manifesto of Paul" that the "wholeness" of Jesus' mission is applied to the nations (p. 225).

Chapter 5 concerns the influence of prophecy on Jesus' mission, primarily the temple critique of Jeremiah. In a sense, this chapter sums up a number of themes that have been just below the surface in the previous sections. Jesus was a prophet in the tradition of the Hebrew Bible, who critiqued the temple out of great respect. He was not bypassing the temple in the light of the dawning kingdom (contra N. T. Wright) nor offering himself as a functional substitute (contra Crossan). Citing the overwhelming evidence that the earliest of Jesus' followers met and continued to meet in the temple, Catchpole argues that if Jesus was replacing the temple, his followers seem to have missed that point. He supports this assertion by examining a number of "nods and winks" (p. 231) that indicate Jesus' attitude toward the temple was not unlike that of Jeremiah or the other prophets.

In his final chapter, Catchpole addresses the ongoing importance of the atonement as it was experienced by the resurrection people in the Eucharist. He tracks the last supper traditions through the redactional process and concludes that the Eucharist meal was the ultimate manifestation of the table fellowship that marked Jesus' ministry (p. 298). The meal, like the death of Jesus, is a prelude to the resurrection. By participating in the meal, the resurrection people participate in the resurrection of Jesus (p. 300).

Since this is a collection of essays originally given as addresses, there are certain resulting shortcomings. The work uses in-text citations sparingly. Interaction with scholarship is quite general, as one would expect in a Lent address. There are occasional asides that do not seem particularly important to the topic of the chapter, such as several pages on Anglican descriptions of Mary (pp. 114–18). The chapters seem to cover far more than their intriguing titles might have implied. Even so, this book represents the thinking and spiritual reflections of a long-time practitioner of the historical methods of interpretation and ought to be a welcome addition to any library.

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Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony. By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xiii + 538 pp., \$32.00.

Richard Bauckham is professor of New Testament studies and Bishop Wardlaw Professor at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Nearing the end of his fruitful teaching career, Bauckham has written his most significant work to date. *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* expresses dissatisfaction with the form-critical assumption that the traditions about Jesus were transmitted orally over a lengthy period of time during which they underwent significant change. Bauckham's thesis is that the original eyewitnesses

of Jesus' ministry played a crucial role in both forming and ensuring the accuracy of the traditions about Jesus that are contained in the NT Gospels.

Bauckham shows that the prologue to Papias's *Exposition of the Dominical Logia* (c. AD 110) indicates that Papias collected oral traditions from two of the last surviving disciples of Jesus, Aristion and John the Elder. He then argues that Papias's desire to preserve eyewitness testimony was characteristic, not only of the best historians of the era, but also of the church of the period. He concludes: "For the purpose of recording Gospel traditions in writing, Evangelists would have gone either to eyewitnesses or to the most reliable sources that had direct personal links with the eyewitnesses" (p. 34).

Bauckham suggests that many of the names preserved in the Gospel accounts are the names of persons well known in the Christian communities as eyewitnesses who reported the accounts to which their names were attached. Although he admits that the evidence bears no "probative force," Bauckham points out that some of the stories associated with names contain some of the most vivid detail, a feature that is consistent with the suspicion that they preserve eyewitness testimony. Bauckham also demonstrates that the names in the Gospels are not fictive names inserted into the tradition during the process of oral transmission as form critics frequently claim. First, neither Matthew nor Luke ever gave a new name to a character left anonymous in Mark. Second, the frequency of common and rare names so closely matches statistical analysis of Palestinian names known from texts and inscriptions from the same era that they could not have been created out of thin air especially outside of Palestine.

Bauckham posits that the Twelve constituted an official body of eyewitnesses who "formulated and authorized the core collection of the traditions in all three Synoptic Gospels" (p. 97). This is suggested by the lists of the names of the Twelve that appear in all three of the Synoptics. These lists are not likely mere introductions to the main characters of the narrative since seven of these disciples are never mentioned again in Mark or Luke and six of them are never mentioned again in Matthew. Bauckham notes the high degree of consistency in the names, their groupings, and the epithets associated with the names and concludes: "It is difficult to account for this phenomenon except by the hypothesis that the Twelve were the official eyewitnesses and guarantors of the core of the gospel traditions" (p. 108).

Bauckham observes that the Gospels and Acts place special emphasis on the fact that the apostles were eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry "from the beginning" (Acts 1:21-22; 10:36-42; Luke 1:1-4; John 15:26-27) to the end. He then argues that this qualification of the eyewitness sources of the Gospels was highlighted through an "inclusio of eyewitness" in which references to the primary witness whose testimony is preserved in the Gospels appear at the beginning and ending of the Gospels. Bauckham finds this inclusio of eyewitness not only in Mark, Luke, and John, but also Lucian's *Alexander* and Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus*.

Bauckham examines twenty-one passages in Mark in which a plural verb or verbs that lack an explicit subject describe the movements of Jesus and his disciples and are immediately followed by a singular verb or pronoun referring to Jesus. Both redaction of these passages in Matthew and Luke and numerous textual variants attest to the awkwardness of the construction, which would more naturally be read as a first-person plural. Bauckham accepts Cuthbert Turner's opinion that these Markan third-person plurals were modifications of an original first-person plural that indicated an eyewitness's participation in the event. Through a process of elimination, Bauckham shows that the eyewitness testimony would have been that of Peter, James, or John. He suggests that the passages in question operate in tandem with the inclusio of eyewitness testimony and are closely related to a pattern of references to Peter. Bauckham concludes: "The Gospel reflects the way Peter, as an apostle commissioned to communi-

cate the gospel of salvation, conveyed the body of eyewitness traditions that he and other members of the Twelve had officially formulated and promulgated" (p. 180).

Bauckham also develops Gerd Theissen's argument that Mark's account left certain individuals anonymous in order to protect their identities from the Jewish authorities. Theissen suggests that the "protective anonymity" of the person who cut off the ear of the high priest's slave and of the man who fled naked from the scene of Jesus' arrest demonstrates that Mark's passion tradition was composed in Jerusalem during the generation of the eyewitnesses, AD 30–60. Bauckham suggests that protective anonymity also explains the anonymity of the bystanders who lent the colt that Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the owner of the house where Jesus and his disciples observed their final Passover, and the woman who anointed Jesus. The Gospel of John named figures who were anonymous in the Synoptics, not because there was a tendency to add names to anonymous figures in the process of oral tradition as form criticism claimed, but because John wrote at a time when the protection of anonymity was no longer needed.

In examining Papias's accounts concerning the composition of the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, Bauckham indicates that both accounts should probably be traced to John the Elder, one of Jesus' disciples. He argues that the accuracy of Papias's claim that Mark preserved Peter's testimony was confirmed by two other often overlooked and independent sources: Gospel of Thomas 13 and the teaching of the Egyptian Gnostic Basilides mentioned in Clement of Alexandria's *Stromateis*.

Bauckham devotes several chapters to a discussion of the transmission of Gospel traditions. He rightly critiques Dunn's application of insights from the work of Kenneth Bailey and argues that Dunn failed to show proper appreciation for the role of eyewitnesses who served not only as the originators but also the "living and active guarantors of the traditions" (p. 290). Under the influence of Gerhardsson but qualifying him at crucial points, Bauckham argues that the oral traditions behind the Gospels were formal, controlled traditions. They were controlled in that specific practices including memorization and note-taking were employed to ensure that the tradition was faithfully transmitted from a qualified traditioner to others. They were formal in that eyewitnesses (Bailey's "clearly identified teachers") transmitted traditional material to community teachers (Bailey's "clearly identified students"), whose authority to teach others was derived from their association with the eyewitnesses. Bauckham also summarizes recent findings from sociological and psychological studies on the reliability of eyewitness memory. He argues that the uniqueness of the events witnessed by the disciples and the significance of those events would have made them all the more memorable.

Bauckham argues that the Fourth Gospel was written by an eyewitness. He challenges the view of Bernard Schrenk, and Brown that γράφειν in John 21:24–25 was merely causative and demonstrates that the verb meant either that an eyewitness wrote the Gospel or dictated it to an amanuensis. He argues against the view that the Gospel originally ended with chapter 20 by pointing to several intriguing correspondences between the prologue and the epilogue in chapter 21 as well as parallels between the two stages of the conclusion. He also argues that the first person plural pronoun in 21:24 is used as a substitute for "I" and marks the Gospel as an "authoritative testimony." He appeals to evidence within the Gospel as well as to the testimony of Papias, which is echoed in the Muratorian Canon, Irenaeus, and Polycrates, to suggest that the author of the Fourth Gospel was not John, the son of Zebedee, but rather John the Elder, a disciple and eyewitness of Jesus' ministry who was not one of the Twelve. The absence of a list of the Twelve, the prominence of named disciples who were not members of the Twelve, and the author's intention of remaining anonymous until the end of the Gospel, which makes it unlikely that he is previously named in the Gospel, are features that combine to preclude identifying the author as one of the Twelve, Lazarus, Thomas,

or Nathaniel. Furthermore, the obscurity of John the Elder makes it unlikely that the Gospel is pseudepigraphal.

In his final chapter, Bauckham turns to questions of the philosophy of history and epistemology. He supports Paul Ricoeur's critical realism, which is characterized by a robust appreciation for the value and necessity of testimony for the historian. He quotes approvingly Ricoeur's comment that "we have nothing better than testimony and the criticism of testimony to accredit the historian's representation of the past" (p. 489). Bauckham argues that trusting testimony is indispensable to historiography but that this trust need not be a blind faith. Critical assessment of the testimony remains necessary, but this assessment is an evaluation of whether the testimony is trustworthy or not rather than an attempt to verify or falsify every detail that the testimony relates. Using holocaust testimonies as an example, Bauckham argues that one must not automatically distrust testimonies simply because they portray extraordinary events: "We must beware of a historical methodology that prejudices inquiry against exceptionality in history and is biased toward the leveling down of the extraordinary to the ordinary" (p. 506).

It is possible to disagree with Bauckham at several points. I remain unconvinced, for example, that the Greek translations of Matthew's testimony were rather drastic revisions of the original Matthean source that reassigned the story of another disciple's call to Matthew and that significantly disturbed the original order of the Matthean source (see esp. pp. 108–12, 131–32, 222–25). This treatment of Matthew seems to weaken some of Bauckham's major arguments in support of his thesis. However, Bauckham's position is well argued and worthy of extensive interaction by scholars of different persuasions.

One does hope that differences with Bauckham over these and other issues will not hinder appreciation for his greater contribution to NT scholarship. Bauckham's major thesis that the four Gospels must be taken seriously as eyewitness testimony is a vast improvement over the view of the Gospels championed by form critics and a significant improvement over the view of the Gospels recently espoused by James Dunn. Bauckham has argued what many of us have been thinking about the nature of the Gospels for a long time, but he has done so with an erudition and persuasiveness that few could match. Graham Stanton did not exaggerate when he observed: "Richard Bauckham's latest book shakes the foundations of a century of scholarly study of the Gospels." *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* is a *tour de force* whose many compelling arguments should result in a paradigm shift in Gospel and historical Jesus studies. If it is given the attention that it deserves, this work could easily become the most important book in NT studies to be published thus far this millennium.

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The Pre-existent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. By Simon J. Gathercole. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xii + 344 pp., \$32.00 paper.

Simon Gathercole is already well known as one of the main critics of the influential "new perspective" in Pauline studies. In this his second book, he sets out to challenge "critical orthodoxy" on early Christology. His thesis is that there is evidence of belief in Jesus' pre-existence in the Synoptic Gospels. Building this case, Gathercole aligns himself most closely with Richard Bauckham and Larry Hurtado, who also argue for

an early high Christology that is at home in a Jewish context. He also demonstrates his impressive knowledge of ancient language and primary sources coupled with an equally impressive grasp of the secondary literature.

Finding previous arguments in favor of his thesis to be lacking, Gathercole begins his argument (chap. 1) by showing the intrinsic likelihood that pre-existence can be found in the Synoptics. The conviction can be found in NT writings that antedate the Synoptics (Rom 8:3; 1 Cor 8:6; 10:4–5; 15:47; 2 Cor 8:9; Gal 4:4; Phil 2:6–8 are the most important references). Gathercole also wants to date Hebrews and Jude before the destruction of the temple and finds these writings to be important witnesses of pre-existence as well (Heb 1:2; 2:14, 17; Jude 5–6).

With respect to the Synoptic Gospels themselves, Gathercole goes on to argue that Jesus transcended the “heaven-earth divide” and the “God/creation divide” (chap. 2). He points out how the transfiguration is described as a theophany (Mark 9:2–8 par.); how Jesus speaks as a participant in the heavenly council (Mark 13:32 par.; Luke 10:18–20; 22:31–33; Matt 11:25–26); how other heavenly beings (demons) recognize him; how he is the one who elects (Mark 3:13 par.; 6:13 par.; Matt 11:27 par.); how he forgives sin (Mark 2:1–12 par.; Luke 7:49); how he is charged with blasphemy (Mark 2:1–12 par.; 14:63–64 par.); his nature miracles (Mark 4:35–41; 6:45–52 par.); the use of Jesus’ name as modeled after the name YHWH; how Jesus is worshiped; his supernatural knowledge; how he is the one who sends the prophets (Matt 23:34–36); how he is mentioned between the Father and the Holy Spirit (Matt 28:19); how he defines what is good in the sense that only God is good (Mark 10:17–22); how Peter responds to him in the way Isaiah responds to God (Luke 5:1–11); how he is called Emmanuel (Matt 1:23); and how he promises his presence with his disciples, modeled on the Jewish concept of the Shekinah (Matt 18:20; 28:20). Gathercole does not find pre-existence in any of these passages. His argument is that pre-existence is entirely consistent with the way Jesus is described in the Synoptic Gospels.

In chapter 3, Gathercole introduces his main evidence, the “I have come”-sayings. All the instances where Jesus says “I have come” and completes it with a statement of purpose are included here. A quick survey of the sayings reveal that they cover the entirety of Jesus’ life, not only his death or specific tasks. For this reason, other common explanations of these sayings must be rejected. They cannot refer to Jesus’ coming from Nazareth, his coming onto the public stage, or his coming as a prophet or messiah to Israel (chap. 4).

The formula is frequently used by angels, however, to describe the reason for their mission to earth. In chapter 5, Gathercole finds 25 examples from Jewish literature, ranging from the book of Daniel to the Midrash on Proverbs, where angels “have come” to earth for a purpose. Only seven of these can with certainty be dated earlier than the NT, however (Dan 9:22, 23; 10:12, 14; 11:2; Tob 5:5). Gathercole maintains that the formula is typically used to describe a coming from heaven to earth, where the envoy has a conscious, previous existence (in contrast to the prophets, who merely existed in the council of God). There are also some examples where God himself is said to come to the earth for a purpose.

The heart of Gathercole’s argument follows in chapter 6, where he offers his exegesis of the “I have come”-sayings. He finds the strongest evidence for pre-existence in Luke 12:49, 51 par.; Matt 10:35—sayings that refer to Jesus’ entire mission and depict him as bringing divine judgment to the world. The saying about casting fire on the earth (Luke 12:49) implies that he brings this fire from somewhere other than the earth.

Chapter 7 then turns to the corresponding “sending”-sayings, which also summarize Jesus’ ministry. Gathercole concedes that these sayings are equally compatible with a prophetic Christology, as prophets also are “sent.” However, the exalted Christology of

the Synoptic Gospels rules out the prophetic interpretation. Gathercole therefore maintains that these sayings should be interpreted in light of the “I have come”-sayings, as implying pre-existence.

In previous studies on pre-existence, the Wisdom motifs in the Synoptic Gospels have often been read as an identification of Jesus with God’s Wisdom. This identification has then been seen as evidence of Christ’s pre-existence. Gathercole does not support this line of argument, however (chap. 8). He finds that the Synoptic Gospels make use of Wisdom motifs in their description of Jesus, without identifying Jesus with Wisdom (Matt 11:18–19 par., 28–30; Luke 10:21–22 par.; 11:49–51 par.). These sayings no more imply pre-existence than do other descriptions of wise men (e.g. Sirach 50).

Although he does not see Wisdom motifs as primary in Matt 23:37, Gathercole in chapter 9 argues that Jesus is here described as a transcendent figure who has called out to Israel throughout her history (“how often”). In an excursus, Gathercole is open to the possibility of a beginning Logos-Christology in Acts, noting that the word is sent (Acts 10:36; 13:26).

The remaining part of the book is dedicated to the four main titles for Jesus. He finds that the origin of the Messiah transcends Davidic lineage in the quotation from Ps 110:3 in Mark 12:35–37 par. (chap. 10). He also considers the messianic title *ἀνατολή* (usually translated “dawn”) in Luke 1:78, which comes “from on high,” indicating his heavenly origin. For the title “Lord,” Gathercole sees two instances where the title may function within the setting of a dialogue in the heavenly court: Mark 1:2–3 and 12:35–37 (chap. 11). He finds that the pre-existent Son of Man is presented as the speaker of Ps 78:2 in Matt 13:35 (chap. 12). His argument is based on a parallel with the *Similitudes of 1 Enoch*, where a pre-existent kingdom is also revealed in parables by the Son of Man. Since the Son of Man in the *Similitudes* is a pre-existent figure, it is possible that Matthew thinks of him in a similar way. Gathercole does not discuss the date of the *Similitudes* (which is usually taken to be late first century AD). As for the Son of God title (chap. 13), Gathercole finds the clearest indication of pre-existence in the parable of the wicked tenants (Mark 12:1–12), in the reference to the sending of the son. He does not comment on the sending of the servants.

In his concluding chapter on the theological implications, Gathercole emphasizes that the “I have come”-sayings imply that it was an act of his own will when Jesus came into the world (cf. G. B. Caird). He therefore finds that some contemporary explanations of pre-existence, such as ideal pre-existence, do not do justice to the NT witness.

Gathercole has presented a carefully argued case, and the question of pre-existence in the Synoptics should certainly be reopened as a result of this study. For most of the passages he discusses, however, other explanations are possible, as he readily admits. His conclusions generally being cautions, I find myself a little puzzled why he insists that the “I have come”-sayings are the strongest evidence for his case. He maintains that the “I have come”-sayings refer to the entire earthly life of Jesus. Yet is this really the case? Are these sayings not adequately accounted for under the rubric: Jesus’ public ministry? There is no reference to Jesus’ birth or incarnation, such as we find in the clearer pre-existence sayings in Gal 4:4–5 and Phil 2:6–7.

For those who did not already believe that Jesus was pre-existent, would they think of the idea because Jesus said “I have come”? I do not think so, no matter how many angels they had met. Viewed in isolation, these sayings are at best inconclusive. The weight of Gathercole’s argument, as I see it, lies in its cumulative force. If the readers of the Synoptic Gospels were prompted by the “I have come”-sayings to ask where Jesus came from (and they might not have been so prompted), they would probably think that heaven was the answer to that question. If they had previously read Philipians, that answer would lie even closer at hand. In other words, it seems to me that the “I have come”-sayings can be read as consistent with the NT belief in pre-existence, but hardly

as a source of that same belief. The reason for Gathercole's focus on the "I have come"-sayings is perhaps his dogmatic interest in seeing the pre-existent Jesus as a person with his own will.

These reservations notwithstanding, the book is recommended to all who want to learn how a brilliant and erudite scholar builds his case.

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John: Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist. By Warren Carter. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006, xvi + 264 pp., \$19.99 paper.

This book is part of a series from Hendrickson devoted to introductory issues in the study of the canonical Gospels. The other works in the series include Carter's other volume on Matthew (originally published in 1996; revised in 2004), Francis J. Moloney's volume on Mark (2004), and Mikeal C. Parsons's volume on Luke (2007). Each volume is aimed at college and seminary students without prior exposure to the Gospels, as well as clergy and educated laity looking for solid resources for teaching and preaching.

A unique feature of the series in general, and of the present work in particular, is suggested by its subtitle: "Storyteller, Interpreter, Evangelist." While this is most likely lost on those using the book as a primer, the subtitle suggests the use of insights from different critical methodologies in the study of the Gospels. Throughout the book, elements of historical, source, redaction, and narrative-critical approaches are introduced and discussed, as are a number of important trends in the history of interpretation. This is done in a way that will be instructive for an audience of beginners.

The first major division of the book is devoted to an examination of the "storytelling" role of the Fourth Gospel. This unit consists of six chapters, each of which is concerned with issues related to the final form of the narrative. Chapter 1 discusses the genre of John's Gospel, beginning with the foundational assumption that one cannot successfully read without a basic understanding of a work's genre. Carter proceeds carefully through a number of options before arriving at the conclusion that the Fourth Gospel comes closest to the category of "ancient revelatory biography." He argues that it not only follows the form of ancient biography, but it includes "features of others genres, especially literary and thematic features of revelatory writings" (p. 17).

After answering the question of genre, Carter discusses plot (chap. 2) and characterization (chaps. 3 and 4). These three chapters contain helpful insights related to narrative-critical hermeneutics as well as some of the subtle nuances of the reading process. Drawing upon Aristotle's explanation that plot is the "necessary or usual consequence" of a story, Carter offers a proposal for how John's plot should be understood. The plot of the Fourth Gospel, he argues, centers around Jesus' claim to be the chosen agent of God. This claim brings him into conflict with a number of groups, leading to his rejection and ultimately to his crucifixion at the hands of the Jerusalem elite. However, when God raises Jesus the reader sees that death is not the end of the story and that Jesus is the chosen agent of God.

Concerning characterization, Carter argues that God and Jesus are the two primary players in the Fourth Gospel. The role of God, while implied in many instances, is clearly an important one. However, Jesus is the only fully developed character in the Fourth Gospel, a point that has long been recognized by narrative critics. Carter also

recognizes the importance of the lesser but enigmatic characters in John's story. These include *Ioudaioi* ("the Jews"), the disciples, a number of women characters, the man born blind, and Pilate. According to Carter these minor characters have three functions. They serve to advance the story, highlight Jesus' significance, and reveal the purposes of God to a greater degree.

Chapter 5 ("Johnspeak: The Gospel's Distinctive Dualistic Language") proceeds through a number of the important Johannine contrasts (e.g. from above/from below; death/life; light/darkness; etc.), showing how they depict the "distinctive and alternative identity of those who have entrusted themselves to follow Jesus" (p. 104). This chapter is helpful in showing how one of the Fourth Gospel's literary features is especially important to the Gospel's overall theological presentation.

Chapter 6 is essentially a hodge-podge of material that completes the discussion of John as "Storyteller." This chapter includes an explanation of the narrator's use of side comments to the reader, various "I am" statements, repetition, intentional ambiguity, riddles, and irony. For the reader with no previous exposure to the Fourth Gospel, this chapter will surely be the most beneficial one in the book's first section. It not only points out specific features of which the reader should be aware but also explains the significance of those elements for the developing story. Specifically, the author comments that one purpose of John's many distinctive literary elements is "to reveal and to confuse" (p. 126). Carter's discussion of these elements, however, accomplishes only the former.

The second major division of the book focuses on John as interpreter. This section contains two chapters: "John: Interpreter of Scriptures and Sources about Jesus" (chap. 7); and "John: Interpreter for Changing Historical Circumstances" (chap. 8). By these titles the reader can already perceive the difference in the emphasis of the first and second divisions of the book. Whereas the previous section was concerned with the final form of the narrative, this section discusses the sources behind the Gospel's composition and its most prominent source-critics. Chapter 7 looks at John's use of the Hebrew Scriptures, as well as the evangelist's use and creative shaping of other Jesus traditions. Chapter 8 builds upon this discussion by examining Bultmann's "Ecclesiastical Redactor" and the important source-critical theories of J. Louis Martyn and Raymond E. Brown. Again, Carter's presentation in this chapter provides material that will be of particular benefit to those with no prior exposure to the Fourth Gospel.

The third division of the book focuses on John as "Evangelist." Like the second division of the book, this section is shorter than the first, containing only two chapters. Chapter 9 is devoted to questions about the authorship and original audience of the Fourth Gospel. Carter argues that there is "no special prominence for, or link with, the disciple John in the gospel" (p. 193) and correctly notes that the title "According to John" is a late second-century addition to the work. He concludes that identifying an author remains elusive because of the limited clues available to modern scholars.

The final chapter ("The Good News according to John") is a comprehensive look at the theological emphases of the Fourth Gospel in light of the material in the previous two sections of the book. It ably pieces together the rest of Carter's discussion in a coherent fashion. Carter concludes this final chapter with a postscript that focuses on the modern interpretive task and strategies for doing that.

This book has many commendable elements. One particularly helpful feature of the book is found in the author's consistent ordering of material. In nearly every chapter, Carter enumerates his major points of emphasis after some initial discussion. This approach keeps the weightier portions of his discussions accessible to the uninitiated reader and allows for greater clarity of thought about the content of each chapter. In addition to this, Carter shows an awareness of important secondary literature and major discussions in the study of the Fourth Gospel.

The greatest strength of this book is its emphasis on reading the narrative as an autonomous story and allowing John's Gospel to speak independently of any other tradition. Evangelical students of the Gospels have a tendency to get mired in the historical minutiae of the text or to harmonize first and thereby miss out on the distinctive theological contributions of the writers. Because of these all too common tendencies, Carter's volume will prove useful for helping evangelical students read the Fourth Gospel as an independent narrative. This text will prove useful for introductory classes on the Fourth Gospel and is highly recommended.

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Being Conformed to Christ in Community: A Study of Maturity, Maturation and the Local Church in the Undisputed Pauline Epistles. By James George Samra. Library of New Testament Studies 320. London: T & T Clark, 2006, xviii + 259 pp., \$130.00.

In this detailed study, James George Samra investigates the topic of "maturity" in the undisputed Pauline epistles, particularly as it relates to a process of growth and the church's role in facilitating this process. He begins in chapter 1 by discussing the lack of attention given to this topic in current scholarship. This is traced back to, among other factors, the Lutheran tradition of *simul iustus et peccator*, which rejected the idea of growth and maturity, holding that Christians remain sinners even though justified (Samra mentions that Luther himself held to a view of progress). Where scholars have discussed the topic, their observations have been insightful but incomplete. For example, although Adolf Schlatter correctly identified the importance of the process of being conformed to the image of Christ, he did not explain how the process occurred or how the community facilitated the process. Thus Samra sets out to demonstrate that the undisputed Pauline epistles reflect a concept of maturity as a process, which specifically entails being conformed to the image of Christ, and to describe how Paul intended the local church to have a critical role in this maturity.

In chapter 2 Samra argues that Paul understood his apostolic commission as developing mature believers for Christ's coming. Paul particularly models his ministry in light of Moses, who was both prophet and shepherd of God's people. Furthermore, for Paul the churches were an essential component for accomplishing this aspect of his commission, since the churches, like himself, were responsible for the "building up" of the community.

In chapter 3 Samra examines two questions: (1) What does Paul think it means to *be* mature? (2) How does Paul think someone *becomes* mature? Here he presents seven marks of maturity (mature/complete/perfect, spiritual, holy, free, wise, strong, and Christlike) and concludes that Christ is the ultimate standard of maturity. He examines both the stative-oriented and process-oriented aspects of Paul's thoughts on maturity.

Chapter 4 then focuses upon the motif of conformity to Christ. Samra examines five central passages: Phil 3:7–21; Rom 8:29; 12:1–2; 2 Cor 2:14–4:18; 1 Cor 15:1–58; and Gal 3:26–4:20. He concludes that this conformity entails having one's character aligned with Christ's. Since character refers to the non-material aspects of one's existence, conformity to the image of Christ relates to realized eschatology and is not simply future. Samra identifies five means, or components, through which one is conformed. These five means, the subject of chapter 5, are identifying with Christ, enduring suffering, "beholding" Christ, receiving and living out wisdom from God, and imitating a godly example.

Chapter 6 discusses the role of the local church in the maturation process. Samra argues that Paul saw participation in the local church as being essential for maturity, and, focusing on 1 Corinthians, he describes how this maturity was to take place as the church facilitated the five components of the maturation process. Chapter 7 is then a summary of the study.

Overall, Samra has presented a detailed study of an important topic and rightly highlights the importance of growth in the individual Christian and the significant role of the community in this growth. One of the strengths of his work is the extensive use of Scripture. Samra ably demonstrates his point that maturity is an important topic for Paul, especially as it relates to conformity to Christ, and that the church is to play a vital role in the process.

Furthermore, Samra does well in explaining and clarifying some vital introductory issues. For example, he discusses the relationship between individuals and groups in Pauline theology, providing a helpful integration. Thus Samra notes that while Paul always saw the individual in relation to a group he could also conceive of the individual as “single agent,” although not as Descartes’s and Locke’s “autonomous, personally free self” (pp. 28–29).

There are several ways in which the study could have been strengthened. Some of the problems simply reflect the difficulty of tackling such a broad topic. Despite Samra’s overall detailed attention to Paul’s writings, some additional passages such as Phil 2:6–11 could have added much to the study but are discussed only briefly. In another example, Samra says that because he agrees with Michael Gorman (*Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004]), who identifies aspects of Christlikeness such as faith and love, he will go on to describe other marks of maturity. Yet because the aspects that Gorman identifies are so central, it would have been helpful to bring such critical themes into the present volume to a greater degree, even if they were not discussed extensively. Samra further notes that his discussion of the marks selected is not comprehensive. This further raises the question as to why he chose the ones that he did and what makes them particularly relevant to his study.

Samra’s categories can be confusing at times. In chapter 3 he distinguishes the work of the Spirit from the five components or means of being conformed to the image of Christ, explaining that the Spirit “facilitates” the five means. However, one could argue that the Spirit’s work could also be a means, and Samra does mention the Spirit as a “means by which transformation takes place” (p. 110). In another example, there seems to be a bit of overlap among the five components of the maturation process. Imitating Christ could be an overarching category for some of the remaining four, such as suffering, which Samra does mention briefly as being an aspect of what is imitated (p. 126). More discussion in terms of the significance of possible overlap could be enlightening and add further depth to the study.

In conclusion, Samra has rightly noticed and highlighted some significant connections, specifically between Paul’s expectations for the maturity of the believers as it relates to Christ and the church. The study exhibits some of the weaknesses to be expected in light of the extended nature of the topic and could use greater clarification in its categorization. However, Samra has still produced a valuable synthesis of significant themes, such as conformity to Christ, the role of the church, and the process of spiritual growth. Overall, this study is a valuable contribution to our understanding of Pauline ecclesiology and spiritual growth.

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Paul, the Stoics, and the Body of Christ. By Michelle V. Lee. SNTSMS 137. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, xiii + 224 pp., \$90.00.

This monograph is a revision of Lee's doctoral dissertation under Harold W. Attridge at Notre Dame. The study is an exegetical examination of 1 Corinthians 12 based on a philosophical understanding of the image of the body and its ethical application. Lee investigates how Paul, like the Stoics, uses "body" language to develop a sense of community identity and then applies it to ethical injunctions. The work intends to be an application of Troels Engberg-Pedersen's ethical model, whereby an individual moves from a self-directed ethical orientation to group-directed orientation through identification with some external factor (which for the Stoics was reason, but for Paul was the Christ event). As Engberg-Pedersen applied the model to Paul's arguments in Philippians, Galatians, and Romans, Lee now applies a similar analysis to 1 Corinthians 12–14. She intends her application to be a "more concrete" understanding of Engberg-Pedersen's basic structure. Whereas Engberg-Pedersen argues for similarity between Paul and the Stoics in the discursive model but not the content, Lee argues that through applying the "mind of Christ," reason plays a fundamental role for Paul as it does for the Stoics. She concludes that Paul is influenced by Stoicism in the way in which he conceives of the Corinthians as a unified body through their membership in "the universal new humanity."

The book is fluid and accessible with easily referenced footnotes, primary and secondary source bibliographies, and three indices. After an initial introductory chapter the book is divided into two parts. The first part is a background section addressing the use and application of the body metaphor among the Stoics. Here the book addresses the body metaphor generally, the relevance of the "body" in Stoicism to universal humanity, and a more lengthy treatment of how the Stoic view of universal humanity relates to ethics. The second part explores the function of the body metaphor in Corinthians. This includes a lengthy treatment of the community as Christ's body in 1 Corinthians 12, an excursus on the "mind of Christ" in 1 Corinthians 1–4, and a treatment of how the body of Christ is the basis for ethical application in 1 Corinthians 13–14.

While there have been many proposals for the source of Paul's "body of Christ" phrase, a "proper methodology," Lee suggests, must consider both the source and its function (p. 10). This is the basis for Lee to propose using Stoic philosophy as the appropriate backdrop for understanding Paul's use of the body metaphor. After surveying some examples of the Stoic use of the body metaphor in political *homonoiā* or "concord" speeches, she proceeds to show how the Stoics conceived of the physical universe as a body. The universe was viewed by the Stoics as a living body unified through spirit (*πνεῦμα*) and governed by mind (*νοῦς*). Humans participate by sharing in *νοῦς* to form a unified universal humanity. Moral education was to consist in making the critical link between this ontological identity and subsequent action. The key link was via the Stoic notion of "belonging" (*οἰκειώσεις*), whereby the moral choices are made in light of individuals recognizing that they belong to a greater social whole. Stoic ethics functioned at two levels: principles that provided the proper moral foundation and precepts that describe actions demanded by concrete situations. The goal was to cultivate behavior that sought to preserve the common bond of a unified universal humanity over and against the self-interest of the individual.

In the second half of her book, Lee draws out exegetical connections between Paul in 1 Corinthians 12–14 and elements of the Stoic model she has proposed. In 1 Corinthians 12 Paul lays out the ethical principle of bodily unity. According to Lee, the point of chapter 12 is to show the Corinthians how to evaluate what is beneficial to them (*τὸ συμφέρον* in 1 Cor 12:7), which then must be defined as corporate, that is, relating to

their membership in the body of Christ. The key ingredient for believers to make the ethical transition is their acquisition of the “mind (νοῦς) of Christ” (1 Cor 2:16), whereby God has allowed them to comprehend the new order of humanity instituted in Christ. Paul then follows another Stoic parallel in 1 Corinthians 13 in showing that “love,” resulting from having the mind of Christ, is a “more excellent way” to conduct relationships and build up the body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul provides the corresponding precepts in the context of discussing the gifts of tongues and prophecy. Discussion reserved for chapter 14 is surprisingly brief, and the author is more ready to claim parallels between Stoic conceptions of ἔρως-love and friendship (φιλία) with Paul’s concept of ἀγάπη-love in 1 Corinthians 13 than some readers might be.

One of the useful contributions of the book is Lee’s analysis of the role of the “mind (νοῦς) of Christ” referenced in 1 Cor 2:16. For the Stoics the νοῦς was the unique possession of humanity, which allowed it to comprehend the universal order and act appropriately. Lee argues that Paul’s purpose in 1 Corinthians 1–2 is to change the Corinthians’ “noetic disposition” so that they view their experiences according to the values of the cross instead of the world (p. 162). In other words, as a result of the presence of the Spirit, Paul calls for a cognitive transformation based on an understanding of the cross, which allows them to appropriate the values necessary to live in the eschatological age of the new humanity. However, while drawing out the Stoic similarities, Lee could have more directly engaged the striking dissimilarities in the same passage. The Stoic πνεῦμα universally present in humanity is hardly similar to the divine active agent in Paul. Moreover, (as Lee admits) Stoic theological language is often ambiguous. If among Stoic writers “God” may be equated to mind (either νοῦς or λόγος), spirit (πνεῦμα), soul, fate, providence, nature, governor, and the body of the universe itself, one wonders if Stoic pantheistic monism provides any valid parallel. Likewise, while the moral transformation for the Stoics is completely a process of cognitive recognition, Paul makes it clear that faith necessary for moral transformation is not accessible through human wisdom but depends on the power of God (1 Cor 2:5).

The contrasts that Lee offers between Paul and the Stoics are often more interesting than the similarities. While the Stoics used the body metaphor commonly to reinforce traditional hierarchy, Paul uses it to highlight a status reversal. The weak are indispensable, and the less honorable are given more respect. While this distinction has been observed before, Lee shows how it was not merely a differing principle of social ethics, but a fundamentally different way of comprehending reality. Likewise, in linking the “mind of Christ” with Paul’s exhortation to “think” in the pattern of Christ in Phil 2:5, Lee also points out that the love exemplified by Christ in the Philippians passage stood in opposition to conventional Stoic standards of friendship. Thus for Paul, having the mind of Christ means to love as it is defined according to the order of the universe redefined through Christ’s sacrifice. It is this type of love in 1 Corinthians 14 that then motivates Paul’s surprising elevation of prophecy over tongues, despite the fact that in the ancient world tongues would have been regarded as the higher-status gift.

Overall, the examination of the body metaphor might have worked better as a study to compare and contrast Paul with the Stoics rather than to argue for an overt parallel. Nevertheless Lee’s comparison of the Stoic teaching on the “mind” and the unity of universal humanity with Paul’s exhortation to take on the “mind of Christ” as a call for unity in “a new humanity” is a worthwhile contribution.

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Hebrews: A Commentary. By Luke Timothy Johnson. NTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006, xxviii + 402 pp., \$49.95.

Hebrews: A Commentary is part of the New Testament Library series, which intends (according to the jacket sleeve of the commentary) to present readers with (1) “fresh translations based on the best available ancient manuscripts”; (2) “critical portrayals of the historical world in which the books were created”; (3) “careful attention to their literary design”; and (4) “a theologically perceptive exposition of the biblical text.”

Johnson’s contribution to the series begins with a lengthy and impressive list of commentaries, monographs, and important articles (pp. xvii–xxviii), followed by an introduction (pp. 1–60). The principal part of the book, “The Commentary” (pp. 63–359), divides into twenty-eight units, which are generally eight to twelve pages in length. Each unit has (1) a summary statement; (2) a translation; (3) a brief set of textual notes concerning alternative readings in major Greek manuscripts; and then (4) an easy-to-read, verse-by-verse exposition of the passage.

Interspersed throughout these units of thought are seven excursions, which examine issues such as “Why the Angels” (pp. 82–84), “The Wilderness as Paradigm” (pp. 119–22), “Suffering and the Obedience of Faith” (pp. 149–52), “The Mysterious Melchizedek” (pp. 181–83), “Old and New Covenants” (pp. 210–15), “Sanctuaries Material and Ideal” (pp. 227–32), and “In Praise of Israel’s Heroes” (pp. 310–12). The book ends with a set of indexes: an Ancient Sources Index (pp. 361–97), a Modern Authors Index (pp. 398–400), and a Subject Index, which appears to lack depth (pp. 401–2).

The introduction (pp. 1–60) is broken into four units. First, Johnson presents the place of “Hebrews in the Christian Tradition” (pp. 3–8), where he discusses the eventual acceptance of Hebrews into the NT canon. Second, he sketches the configuration of “Hebrews as a First-Century Composition” (pp. 8–32), in which he addresses the language, literary form, symbolic world, and argument of Hebrews. Of these subsections, Johnson’s “symbolic world” is most important, because he avers, “The Platonism of Hebrews is real—and critical to understanding its argument—but it is a Platonism that is stretched and reshaped by engagement with Scripture, and above all, by the experience of a historical human savior whose death and resurrection affected all human bodies and earthly existence as a whole” (p. 21). Although much of his commentary focuses on how Hebrews quotes or interprets the OT (p. 24) and interacts with first-century Jewish works like those at Qumran, Johnson believes that “the sort of Hellenistic Judaism represented by Philo remains the best overall symbolic world within which to read Hebrews” (p. 28).

Third, and as we might suspect of any introduction, Johnson isolates the standard questions of introduction in the unit “The Circumstances of Composition” (pp. 32–44), where he focuses attention on the rhetorical situation, date (likely between AD 50 and 70), and authorship (favors Apollos over Barnabas as the best two options). Finally, Johnson includes a unit in which he sketches some of the distinctive theological dimensions of Hebrews that continue to challenge readers today (pp. 44–60). He discusses God and Scripture in Hebrews through Platonic eyes, the teaching about Jesus Christ in Hebrews, and discipleship in Hebrews, which involves loyalty, virtues, and suffering. He concludes that “Hebrews challenges present-day sensibilities most of all by seeing suffering as the very heart of discipleship.” “Suffering,” he muses, “is the inevitable concomitant of obedient faith itself. It is the sound of the human spirit opening itself to the presence and power of God. It is the very path by which humans become transformed, as was Jesus, into fully mature children of God” (p. 60).

Johnson’s commentary on Hebrews (pp. 63–359) appears to be in keeping with the series for which it has been written. First, Johnson’s translations are fresh and based

upon major textual evidence. He identifies regularly his exceptions to other translations of the Greek text, which tend to be set off in his exposition with the phrase “my translation . . .” (pp. 64, 274). Other times they are evident in the vast array of word studies and evaluations of Greek syntax. Unfortunately, only the transliteration of the Greek word or phrase appears in parentheses. Second, special attention is given to the world in which Hebrews was created. He underscores any conceivable echo of Platonic thought. He observes, “Hebrews shares the Platonic language that we find in Philo” (p. 19). “In Platonism,” he avers, “the choice between one over the many is always resolved in favor of the one” (p. 65, cf. p. 244). Furthermore, poles of thinking in Hebrews, such as temporal/eternal (p. 235), external/internal (p. 235), real/more real (p. 243), visible/invisible (p. 277), material/invisible (p. 329, 335), what is human/what is divine (p. 331), are discussed to uphold Platonic influence. Finally, he provides the reader with a theologically perceptive exposition of the biblical text that highlights the importance of Scripture, the mature teaching about Christ, and discipleship, which resonates throughout the commentary on Hebrews. Thus these three aspects are well done and in keeping with objectives of the New Testament Library series. Yet careful attention to the literary design of Hebrews was disappointing in that Johnson provides no outline for Hebrews, which stands in contrast to other commentaries in this series (cf. M. Eugene Boring, *Mark: A Commentary*, pp. 4–6; Frank J. Matera, *II Corinthians: A Commentary*, pp. 3–9; Raymond F. Collins, *1 & 2 Timothy and Titus: A Commentary*, pp. 20, 186, 300).

Although similarities between Johnson’s commentary on Hebrews and other recent commentaries have been identified above, Johnson’s work has at least two unique features, one thematic, the other cultural. First, unlike Victor C. Pfitzner, who considers the predominant theme to be a theology of worship (*Hebrews* in the Abingdon New Testament Commentary series), Johnson argues for a theology of discipleship. Second, unlike recent commentators who contend with the possible influences of Gnosticism, Palestinian Judaism via Jewish writings, and Hellenistic Judaism via Philo (cf. Paul Ellingworth, *Hebrews* in the New International Greek Testament Commentary; Craig Koester, *Hebrews* in the Anchor Bible), Johnson appears to skirt these issues by emphasizing a Judaism influenced by a Platonic worldview (or perhaps a Platonic worldview influenced by Judaism). In either case, Johnson’s propensity is to interpret Hebrews via Platonism. He does, however, recognize the parallels that reveal the author’s two traditions: a Greek-speaking worldview via Plato and a Jewish-thinking Judaism via the OT (cf. Harold Attridge in the introduction to his commentary on Hebrews in the Hermeneia series, pp. 28–29).

Although this commentary offers a fresh interaction with the author’s dual cultural influences and theological emphasis on discipleship, I sometimes questioned what appeared to be an overemphasis on the Platonic worldview over the author’s Jewish religious and cultural influences. Nevertheless, Johnson’s commentary is a worthy read and will be a useful work for anyone who wishes to grasp the possible Platonic worldview behind the book of Hebrews and the theological thrust of discipleship in Hebrews.

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The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude. By Peter H. Davids. PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xxxii + 348 pp., \$34.00.

Though we have been well served in recent years with strong English language commentaries on 2 Peter and Jude, most of these appear in volumes that include studies

of 1 Peter (e.g. J. Daryl Charles, *1–2 Peter, Jude* [Scottsdale: Herald, 1999]; Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude* [Nashville: Broadman & Holman 2003]), or larger groupings of NT writings (e.g. Pheme Perkins, *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995]; Lewis R. Donelson, *From Hebrews to Revelation* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001]). There are, however, relatively few book-length studies dedicated to the closely related Jude and 2 Peter alone, though of course there are notable exceptions (among them Jerome H. Neyrey, *2 Peter, Jude* [New York: Doubleday, 1993]; Douglas J. Moo, *2 Peter and Jude* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996]; Steven J. Kraftchick, *Jude, 2 Peter* [Nashville: Abingdon, 2002]). The publication of Peter H. Davids's major study of these somewhat overlooked epistles is welcome news. As he puts it, these short letters "are well worth a commentary of this size and even larger" (p. 3).

Davids's original reading of 2 Peter and Jude and careful evaluations of earlier scholarship are refreshing. I find his dialogue with the secondary literature particularly helpful as it frequently reenergizes some important conversations. For instance, his interaction with Richard Bauckham's 1983 commentary, which continues to cast a long shadow over Jude–2 Peter studies and remains among the most significant analyses of these letters to date, makes for some interesting reading (see Bauckham's *Jude, 2 Peter* [Waco, TX: Word, 1983]). His appreciation of Bauckham's work is obvious but not uncritical. For instance, he reappraises Bauckham's intriguing theory that the author of 2 Peter follows (at 3:10) a Jewish apocalyptic source that is also reflected in *1 Clem.* 23:3 and 2 *Clem.* 11:2–4; 16:3 (pp. 264–65), an idea he finds "possible, but not proven" (p. 277).

Davids also revisits Bauckham's claim that 2 Peter is an example of a testamentary or farewell speech, a type of writing that was often pseudepigraphal. According to this hypothesis, Peter did not write this letter but clues indicating its testamentary character would have been so obvious to the original readers that the author is not guilty of fraudulent behaviour; the authorial claim of Petrine authorship was a transparent fiction. Though this theory remains compelling, Davids's review of Bauckham's thesis (esp. pp. 145–49) helpfully pushes the conversation forward. Among the significant questions he raises is whether 2 Peter resembles the Jewish examples of testamentary writing to the extent that Bauckham claims (p. 148), and consequently Davids's conclusions about authorship are far more cautious. Though he allows that it is "not unreasonable" to suggest that Peter did not write this letter, he finds that Bauckham's argument that "the pseudepigraphal character of 2 Peter [is] incontrovertible" pushes beyond what the evidence allows. He maintains "we do not know enough of Simon Peter's history to know whether or not he could have written 2 Peter" and "we . . . cannot know from *historical investigation* whether [the name Simon Peter in the salutation] is in some sense actual or is a pseudepigraphal attribution" (p. 149; italics his).

Davids's remarks about the authorship of Jude are equally thorough (pp. 8–28). Here he finds slightly more evidence supporting the traditional view, that Jude the brother of Jesus is the author of this text, pointing out that "none of the explanations why someone would use Jude as a pseudonym is convincing" (p. 28). However, he remains cautious on this point, too: "God alone knows, but the arguments against his authorship do not have the type of historical data needed to establish them" (p. 28).

Though Davids's dialogue with contemporary scholarship is a rich feature of this book, there are a few gaps. For instance, he has little to say about non-biblical Petrine pseudepigrapha, though some posit important links with 2 Peter (e.g. the early second-century *Apocalypse of Peter*). Furthermore, Davids does not discuss the possible existence of a kind of Petrine school or community, an idea occasionally introduced to the authorship debates. Donald P. Senior and Daniel J. Harrington, to give a recent example (*1 Peter/Jude and 2 Peter* [Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2003]), suggest such a community origin for the Petrine letters. They refer to this community as a group (pp. 5–6)

or circle (pp. 235–36) because the term “school” “may suggest too much organization” (p. 236). They also speculate about possible connections to such people as Silvanus and Mark and a location in Rome (pp. 6, 235). While this proposal is not new, it is not widespread. Senior and Harrington do not develop this hypothesis to any extent, and Davids’s reminder that we know relatively little about Peter’s story (p. 149) likely accounts for his silence on the matter. (He does not mention Senior and Harrington’s commentary, presumably because his own had already gone to press before its publication). Scholars have been flirting with this idea of a Petrine community at least since a short study by F. H. Chase (1898–1904), and I wonder if there might be value in a sustained examination of the issue. These are minor concerns, ultimately, and say more about my own idiosyncratic interests than important omissions in the book.

An attractive feature of *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* is its readability. It is a very large commentary considering it treats two short NT epistles but remains consistently engaging with an appealing writing style. A conversational tone is a welcome change to the often rigidly formal tendencies of many biblical commentaries, evident in such things as his direct discourse with readers (e.g. “First, notice how . . .” [p. 312]), the introduction of compelling questions (e.g. pp. 57, 197–98, 308), and the insertion of pastoral remarks based on interpretations of the text. Not infrequently, the author reminds readers that the ancient epistles speak meaningfully to the modern congregation, and he invites them to “add [their] own ‘Amen,’” as it were, to Jude’s doxological “response of the [original] congregation” (p. 116).

There are in fact several instances in Davids’s analysis of these writings where he introduces practical and/or theological considerations, allowing his book to speak meaningfully to different reading communities. To give but one example, while navigating the options available to explain the close literary relationship between 2 Peter and Jude (dependence one way or the other, etc.), he takes time to comment on theories of inspiration. Anticipating correctly that some readers might find this subject matter problematic, he reminds them that a view of inspiration should take into account God’s use of “human agents” or “incarnational methods” (p. 141, n. 36). Because of this sensitivity to a diverse reading audience, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* will be useful for clergy and laypeople wanting a serious and thoughtful reading of these letters.

This attention to audience reception and emphasis on the relevance of the NT writings is consistent with the Pillar New Testament Commentary series as a whole, which aims to address “serious pastors and teachers of the Bible,” while avoiding “getting mired in undue technical detail” (remarks by series editor D. A. Carson, p. viii). Davids’s commentary is certainly accessible to the non-specialist but still consistently engages issues of concern for scholars (such as text-critical questions, e.g. pp. 98–99) and therefore would serve both undergraduate and graduate courses rather well.

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The Revelation of Saint John. By Ian Boxall. BNTC 19. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006, xvi + 347 pp., \$29.95.

This is a particularly favorable time to be a student of the book of Revelation. Recent full-scale commentaries by David Aune, Grant Osborne, Gregory Beale, and Stephen Smalley, to name but a few, along with forthcoming offerings from Craig Koester and Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, have given modern interpreters of John’s Apocalypse more tools to wield in trying to decipher the most misunderstood book in the biblical canon.

Add to this list Ian Boxall's commentary in the Black's New Testament Commentary series (BNTC), which replaces the highly respected, though now dated, 1966 commentary by the late George Bradford Caird. Boxall is Senior Tutor and New Testament and Greek teacher at St. Stephen's House, Oxford University.

Despite being a comparatively short work, Boxall's *Revelation* packs solid, weighty exegesis into its compact frame. The commentary is based on Boxall's own translation, which means readers do not need to know Greek (though he does on occasion quote from the Greek NT without transliterating or translating). The book, as with the other volumes in the BNTC, is designed primarily for pastors and students, though scholars will also find plenty within its pages for further rumination and investigation.

The book begins with an introduction, followed by the commentary proper. As with other BNTC commentaries, space is quite restricted for the introduction—only 18 pages here—but Boxall does well to draw attention to most of the major issues given the limitations.

On the genre of Revelation, he suggests that it is inadequate to categorize the book strictly as an apocalypse because of both its prophetic characteristics and epistolary features (pp. 1–3). Elsewhere in the commentary's introduction Boxall calls Revelation an "apocalyptic-prophetic letter" (p. 12). In light of the fact that Revelation presents itself as a circular letter to seven Asian congregations, Boxall suggests comparisons to other NT circular letters such as James and 1 Peter may be warranted (p. 3).

He is agnostic about authorship, but does not rule out the traditional view that the "John" named in 1:1 is John the apostle, the son of Zebedee (p. 7); but, because Boxall believes in the authenticity of the vision, he adds "even the identity of the author can fade into the background so as not to detract from the heavenly message he mediates" (p. 23). Although Boxall leaves room for an actual visionary experience underlying the composition of Revelation (and, too, of other apocalypses [p. 3]), he also notes the conscious literary crafting of the book (p. 4). In keeping with the possibility of the apostle John as the author Boxall favors an early date for the book and places it during or soon after the reign of Nero (p. 8).

Boxall avers that John was writing from Patmos, where he was exiled because of his Christian testimony (perhaps explaining his reliance on the exilic prophets, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel; pp. 10–11). He suggests, in fact, that further studies of this Patmos provenance could open up new avenues of study. One possible thread for further investigation involves imagery in the book of Revelation that may be rooted in the gods of Greek mythological lore (pp. 11–12). As with most contemporary Revelation scholars, Boxall does not believe there is any official state persecution facing the original recipients (pp. 12–13).

Throughout the commentary Boxall stresses the importance of attending to Revelation's theatre of reception, that is, the context in which its first readers/hearers would have experienced it. Revelation was originally meant to be read aloud; it was "an aural experience" (p. 15). More specifically, Boxall believes Revelation was originally used in the Eucharist services of the early church, and, following the lead of A. J. P. Garrow (*Revelation* [New Testament Readings; London: Routledge, 1997]), he believes the book may originally have been meant to be read in six separate installments rather than all at once (p. 16, 18).

Boxall cautions that in trying to uncover the structure of the book modern-day readers need to attend to the rhetorical features of the text (p. 18). His outline of Revelation is a simple description of its contents (pp. 19–20). Following a prologue (1:1–8), the book is divided into two parts, 1:9–11:18 and 11:19–22:11. Part 1 consists of the inaugural vision and seven messages (1:9–3:22); throne-vision and seven seals (4:1–8:1); and seven trumpets (8:2–11:18). Part 2 consists of seven visions (11:19–15:4); seven bowls (15:5–19:10); and seven final visions (19:11–22:11). An epilogue (22:12–21) concludes the book.

The commentary proper is divided according to this structure. Most sections begin with a brief introduction followed by Boxall's translation and a paragraph-by-paragraph (often verse-by-verse) comment.

One of the strengths of Boxall's writing is his ability to engage and sift through diverse scholarly opinion and distill it in a way that is fair, balanced, and above all, lucid. He is particularly strong on the parallels with early Jewish apocalyptic literature and the OT background behind many of Revelation's images (though it is a little strange that there is no discussion on the use of the OT in Revelation in the commentary's introduction). He is usually cautious in his interpretations, not setting forth many novel ideas, though he does on occasion present some innovative exegesis. One particularly unique suggestion is that the angel with the little scroll in 10:1–11 is Christ's angel (cf. 1:1), rather than Christ himself, Gabriel, or some general, non-specific angel.

On the whole, however, Boxall favors a reading of Revelation that is more symbolic rather than one rooted in a historical person or place. Commenting on the sixth trumpet (9:13–21), for instance, he notes "what the Apocalypse sets before us are not primarily coded description of historical events, but kaleidoscopic and polyvalent visions, which work by their evocative power, stretching our imaginations to their limits" (p. 148). So, the two witnesses in 11:4–6 are representative figures rather than specific individuals (p. 163); Babylon in 17:1–19:10 is neither Jerusalem nor Rome, but an illustration of any great city (p. 243); and Har-Magedon (16:16) is not the Mountain of Megiddo or any other earthly place, but a symbolic location (p. 233).

Boxall also shows a keen awareness of and appreciation for the depiction of Revelation in art history. In fact, in discussing the vision of the final judgment (20:11–15), he opines, "Perhaps over the centuries artists [such as Giotto and Michelangelo] have been among the better commentators on such scenes" (p. 289). An up-to-date bibliography along with Scripture reference, author, and subject indices (the last of which could be more fully developed) complete the book.

The commentary is well edited on the whole, though one significant typographical error does warrant mention. While the book's spine suggests this is volume 19 in the BNTC (followed in the title of this review, above), the Library of Congress cataloging-in-publication data on p. iv lists it as volume 18. Not a significant error, but certainly one that should have been caught before going to the printers.

There is also very little treatment about textual matters in the commentary, and, while there are far less textual issues in Revelation than most other NT books, some discussion of the extant manuscripts and the textual curiosities and conundrums that do exist would have added another positive dimension to the commentary.

Boxall is even-handed throughout, though on one occasion he does overstate his opinion. Commenting on the imaginative world of the text, he bemoans, "Perhaps this aspect of Revelation is the most challenging for twenty-first century readers, whose imaginative muscles have become rather flabby, and whose capacity for attentive listening is severely reduced" (p. 26). This is something of an unfair oversimplification and generalization.

Overall, however, Boxall has produced a scholarly, accessible, well-written, highly readable commentary on the book of Revelation. It is ideal for pastors on a budget looking for a commentary that does not advocate an idiosyncratic interpretation but carefully considers a plurality of viewpoints. It will prove equally valuable in introductory-level seminary courses and for students just getting their feet wet in the study of Revelation.

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The Lost Gospel of Judas Iscariot: A New Look at Betrayer and Betrayed. By Bart D. Ehrman. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, viii + 198 pp., \$22.00. *Judas and the Gospel of Jesus: Have We Missed the Truth about Christianity?* By N. T. Wright. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 155 pp., \$18.99.

In April 2006, the newly published Gospel of Judas instantly became an international sensation. Wild and sober claims alike whirled about the internet and other media, while publishers quickly enlisted reputable scholars to sift fact from fiction. Two whose works both appeared in late 2006 were Ehrman and Wright. These books differ from each other considerably.

Bart Ehrman, NT professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, has become well known for his books on textual criticism and heterodox Gospels and the corresponding forms of "Christianity" that produced them. He has repudiated the evangelical faith of his young adult years and now believes that orthodoxy is merely the wing of Christianity that won the political battles of the early centuries. Not surprisingly, he finds the Gospel of Judas an enormously important discovery, not because it contains new historical information about either Judas or Jesus, but because it is one more classic illustration of the radical diversity of early Christian beliefs.

Ehrman's work opens by recounting his personal involvement in this document's publication—a trip to Geneva with a small, select group of scholars to view the manuscript before the English translation was finalized and released. However, he was not allowed to see enough to discover the majority of the contents and thus what its significance would be. Before telling us further what those contents turned out to include, Ehrman leads us through a lengthy discussion of Judas in our earliest Gospels and in the later Gospel tradition. Eschewing any form of harmonization, Ehrman stresses the differences among Mark (in which Judas just does not understand Jesus), Matthew (which blames the Jewish leaders for Judas' fate), Luke (where Judas is empowered by Satan), Acts (which presents a view of Judas' suicide that flatly contradicts Matthew's), John (which makes Judas into the consummate Jew Christians came to love to hate), Papias (who describes a grotesquely bloated Judas filled with pus and worms before his death), the Gospel of Nicodemus (in which Judas tells his wife his fears of Jesus' resurrection, which she doubts, until the chicken she is cooking flies away and Judas goes out and hangs himself), the Arabic Infancy Gospel (where the child Judas, demon-possessed, tries to bite everyone), and the medieval "Golden Legend" (which turns Judas into an Oedipal figure who murders his father and marries his mother).

Ehrman next rehearses the salient facts about our previous awareness of the Gospel of Judas via Irenaeus's late second-century testimony. He then discusses Gnosticism in general, Irenaeus's accurate and inaccurate knowledge of it, and possible links with the Cainite sect. Returning to the story of the discovery of the Gospel of Judas, Ehrman begins in 1978 with the Egyptian cave where this document, along with three other fragmentary works, was found in codex form. He continues through the many bizarre twists of plot as various Middle Eastern antiquities dealers sold or tried to sell the ever-so-fragile materials until they wound up in a New York safe deposit box until 2001, in which the humidity destroyed ten to fifteen percent of what had survived all the centuries and made restoring and reading the Coptic far more difficult than it would have been just twenty-three years earlier.

It is thus not until we get to chapter 6 that we are given an account in any detail of the actual contents of this newly released Gospel. Fortunately, for those who have not read the work itself, Ehrman describes it in considerable detail—conversations between Jesus and his disciples during the last week of his life, denigrating (and even laughing at) his followers and the priestly ministry of sacrifices in the temple because they belong

to the inferior deity of the old age and cannot fathom Gnostic truth. Only Judas claims to understand Christ after he expounds at length on almost impenetrable Gnostic cosmology. As a result, Jesus promises him that “you will exceed all of them, for you will sacrifice the man who clothes me,” referring to the betrayal. Though hated by humanity, Judas’ star will shine brightly in the world to come.

Ehrman next shows how the Gospel of Judas could fit Sethian Gnosticism but also how it discloses affinities with numerous forms of “Christianity,” including other Gnostic groups of the mid-second century. A detailed discussion compares and contrasts the many Gospels’ portraits of Jesus and of the other disciples besides Judas and emphasizes all the “contradictions” that emerge. After stripping away the majority of non-historical, tendentious emphases, the historical *Jesus* that emerges closely resembles Schweitzer’s apocalyptic prophet, as readers of Ehrman’s 1999 book on Jesus will already know. Yet what can be known about the historical *Judas*? As one of Jesus’ twelve closest followers, he too must have been captured by this apocalyptic vision but disillusioned when the conventional expectations of a socio-political kingdom failed to materialize. In a new twist on the Messianic Secret, Ehrman argues that Jesus must have claimed to be the Christ (a king) before his death, for the disciples’ belief in the resurrection to have made them continue to declare him Messiah, but that he did not make these claims publicly. Thus the Jewish authorities needed Judas not only to hand Jesus over to them but to give them the information that would convince the Romans to intervene and deal with the teacher from Nazareth as a political threat.

In the end, only about half of Ehrman’s work is actually about the Gospel of Judas, and more than half of that portion treats its discovery, transmission, and publication, rather than its contents. The document after all is quite short, and if one wants to write an entire book that will interest the general public one has to include a lot of other related but somewhat extraneous material.

Tom Wright, evangelical NT scholar *par excellence* and Anglican bishop of Durham, England, has written a much shorter volume. The number of pages mislead somewhat, since the dimensions of the book are smaller than Ehrman’s, the font size much bigger and the margins noticeably wider. It appears to have been written more hurriedly as well. In fact, hardly *any* of this work is about the contents of the Gospel of Judas *per se*. Only in a half-dozen pages in the middle are its main contours summarized.

Yet what Wright does provide proves highly valuable as a counter to Ehrman and even more radical scholars who actually support forms of Gnosticism as better religious alternatives for the contemporary world than orthodox Christianity (most notably Elaine Pagels). After his own initial autobiographical ruminations on how he came to hear about the discovery of the Judas-Gospel and his involvement with the media, Wright paints in broad but clear brush strokes the salient features of second-century Gnosticism. Like Ehrman but much more briefly, Wright sketches the most important canonical and extra-canonical traditions about Judas as well.

The most important contributions of this volume involve Wright’s presentation of how Gnosticism in general does not herald “good news” (gospel) at all. Its cosmology is radically dualist, denigrating the material world and thus the human body, looking only for immortality of the soul and not bodily resurrection. Its theology is radically anti-Semitic, seeing the God of Israel as horribly wicked. Its sociology is elitist and sexist in ways that make even conservative interpretations of the canonical Christian traditions wonderfully liberating in comparison. Its soteriology is escapist, offering no hope for positive transformation of this world; its Christology in no way challenges the leaders of this world to submit to a higher Lord.

Little wonder, then, that the countless Christian martyrs of the first three centuries did not die for Gnostic doctrine but for the original, apostolic Christian faith, giving the lie to Ehrman’s and others’ views that orthodoxy was defined merely by the winners

of later political fights. That may or may not be true for segments of post-Constantinian church history, but it is demonstrably false in the heyday of the Gospel of Judas in the second and third centuries. Orthodoxy had no political power base then, while Gnostics saved their lives by believing in something so different from true Christianity that the Romans recognized that they posed no threat. It comes as no surprise that Wright can conclude that contemporary advocates of Gnosticism, particularly plentiful in North America, must promote it highly selectively. Even then, their support "has a great deal more to do with social and religious (or, indeed, anti-religious fashions) . . . than with actual historical research" (p. 124).

Of course, neither Ehrman nor Wright should substitute for reading the Gospel of Judas itself and forming one's own opinions of it. The person with time to peruse only one additional work on the issues it raises should consult Wright. A fuller understanding of the complete set of issues surrounding this new find requires Ehrman's volume as well. But beware: though Ehrman often sounds more dispassionate than Wright, he has a less historically accurate agenda to promote.

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The Trinity: Global Perspectives. By Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, xxii + 409 pp., \$39.95 paper.

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen has provided another helpful overview of contemporary theologians on one of the primary loci of the Christian faith, joining many who have taken on the task of surveying the various positions on the Trinity. His unique contribution is his inclusion of those from outside the Western tradition. Part one and two provide brief descriptions of the biblical basis and the historical development of the Trinity. Parts three and four divide theologians between Western views (Europe and North America) and non-Western views (Hispanic, Asian, and African). Kärkkäinen expounds these theologians in terms of their context and particular contributions to the contemporary understanding of the Trinity, concluding each section with a critical assessment of their work. The final part provides his own reflections on the primary areas that need further work and thought as the global dialogue continues.

Kärkkäinen demonstrates his knowledge of trinitarian studies with clear, concise descriptions of the numerous developments and unique contributions of each theologian surveyed. Narrowing down who should be included as primary contemporary contributors in parts three and four proves to be difficult, but his choices represent various denominations, backgrounds, and regions. He begins the overview by praising Barth for bringing the Trinity back to the forefront of Christian theology and making it the central doctrine in Systematics. Rahner's contribution of knowing the Trinity in salvation history and Rahner's Rule set the stage for most developments in the West. Other theologians in the European tradition include Zizioulas, Moltmann, and Pannenberg. The last two, Kärkkäinen admits, get more space than others because they have made and developed the most significant contributions. The North Americans (Jenson, Lacugna, Elizabeth Johnson, M. Erickson, Heim, Smart and Konstantine) are described in light of how they were influenced by Europeans and continued to develop particular trends concerning the Trinity.

These two sections make the reader aware of the particular ideas of each theologian and the modifications to the Trinity that have been developed in Europe and North

America. These modifications include a return to the “Eastern” starting point by emphasizing the three and then turning to the one; the use of perichoresis as a means to identify the unity of God; and multiple proposals concerning whether the terms “Father,” “Son,” and “Holy Spirit” should continue to be used (and, if so, how they can be used) in light of gender debates. The most significant and debated areas include the definition and use of “person” (in relation to the modern understanding of person and if it is appropriate for identifying the three) and how Rahner’s Rule is used either as method or ontology so that the immanent Trinity is sometimes identified with, and therefore reduced to, the economic. Kärkkäinen criticizes these theologians based upon what they sought to do, how well they were able to argue for their particular contribution, and whether their final proposals pass the most basic tests of orthodoxy and avoid tritheism, modalism, and subordination.

The section on non-Western Trinitarian views introduces many theologians with whom most readers of the *Journal* will not be familiar. These perspectives are challenging and helpful in understanding the various trinitarian ideas that other cultures are producing. The choice of these theologians seems difficult because many appear to have lacked orthodox principles for the doctrine of the Trinity as they sought to use their own culture and grammar to articulate it. One of the striking contrasts between the non-Western and Western views is the emphasis of the former (along with that of Heim in the West) upon using the Trinity to address larger cultural issues and other religions’ beliefs. Kärkkäinen’s surveys help the reader understand how different the proposals in other cultures can be and how many are using their own language and background with the hope of articulating the Trinity anew. He makes it clear that a great amount of work needs to be done in terms of knowing how one’s context determines the articulation of one’s doctrine. He further demonstrates just how much work needs to be done in other cultures to develop a proper grammar for the Trinity.

In the final section Kärkkäinen proposes what he considers to be the most important areas for further reflection. These include: the Trinity as the structure of theology; the Trinity as revealed in the biblical narrative; the Trinity as communion; the Trinity and Christology; the economic and immanent Trinity; threeness and oneness; the Trinity and the question of identity; the Trinity as social critic; the Trinity in a particular context; and renaming the Triune God. This is a fair assessment of the “global perspective” in light of the current trends and contributions discussed. Kärkkäinen is correct that these are the most debated and central areas in dialogue today, contributing to many of the most difficult problems in producing orthodox models of the Trinity.

The overarching problem in Kärkkäinen’s work is the lack of clarity concerning what Scripture affirms about the Trinity. His thesis is to provide a “critical theological dialogue and assessment of the state of Trinitarian theology in the beginning of the third millennium in light of biblical and historical tradition and the ever-expanding global theologizing enterprise” (p. xix). While devoting eleven pages to the discussion of the biblical traditional teaching, he fails to note and exposit the most basic passages of Scripture to establish an adequate position in order to critique the various perspectives. Thus, when Kärkkäinen assesses the theologians’ perspectives, his main complaints usually focus on their failure to achieve their intended purpose, or their lack of clarity and unconvincing arguments. But he offers no critique in relation to their perspectives vis-à-vis biblical affirmations about the Trinity. Furthermore, Kärkkäinen fails to discuss the Church fathers’ use of Scripture and their methods of interpretation in defining the Trinity. This would have served the dialogue well, because the Trinity is revealed only in Scripture. In order to determine whose model of the Trinity is right or best, the model’s relation to Scripture must be established and analyzed. Certainly, each culture has its own ways of explaining and defending the Trinity, based upon its own principles. What is lacking in Kärkkäinen’s dialogue with these multiple perspectives,

however, is any idea of a clear scriptural dogma by which the perspectives may be judged. Though his dialogue with these perspectives allows them to speak on their own terms, Kärkkäinen's minimal interaction with the rich biblical tradition concerning the Trinity leaves him with little scriptural considerations with which to analyze critically the various models.

The historical sections provide a basic foundation for understanding the debates and positions that have developed and the major early contributors. The main difficulty with these sections is Kärkkäinen's dependence upon contemporary theologians and their interpretation of the tradition. This is odd because this historical tradition is supposed to be one of his sources for critical evaluation of the theologians (LaCugna, Pannenberg, Moltmann), yet he often relies upon these same theologians' interpretation of the tradition as his basis for constructing that tradition. His use of other interpreters of the tradition such as Gunton is also suspect. Kärkkäinen's application of the tradition in his critical dialogue is also insufficient because he seldom discusses how far these contemporary theologians move away from the tradition. This should have been a central part of each section, especially because most of the Westerners selected did their work in reaction against the classic Western tradition. Moreover, Kärkkäinen seems aware that there is some debate concerning many caricatures of the tradition, but he continues to adhere to them knowing they may be misleading. These include the great divide between Eastern and Western starting points (the one or the three), the role of the social analogy in the tradition, the treatment of the Cappadocians as a unified school of thought, and how the West has made the Trinity an "appendix" doctrine by placing the three after the one.

Kärkkäinen's selection of theologians provides a wide scope of background, but it fails to produce a wide scope of beliefs. The only contributor from the West who was not prone toward a "social" model was Barth. Most of the others contributed to the trend toward the "Eastern" model, and most followed Rahner's paradigm of criticizing the Western tradition begun by Aquinas. Kärkkäinen's selection implies that there are little, if any, contemporary contributions to the doctrine of the Trinity that continue in the classical tradition, or that those beliefs are insignificant or illegitimate in light of contemporary criticism. Yet, the evangelical church continues to confess the Trinity and some of its theologians are helping to develop the doctrine within the parameters of the classical traditional.

One final criticism should be registered. The book begins with the basic principle that the Trinity is the distinguishing mark of Christianity. Many of the perspectives selected by Kärkkäinen, however, see it as a way of relating to other religions with trinitarian structures and as a means for social critique. These theological views were chosen for their contributions toward employing and modifying the Trinity for purposes that extend outside of Christianity. It does benefit readers to know the various perspectives proposed concerning the Trinity, but Kärkkäinen seems to imply that each perspective has a positive contribution to make to trinitarian discussions regardless of its orthodoxy.

Kärkkäinen has provided a useful tool for those pursuing further study on the Trinity and for understanding how the doctrine is changing in contemporary theology. His unique contributions to the materials already available include his incorporation of theologians outside of the West, his ability to pinpoint the precise contributions of the theologians to the global dialogue, his tracing of the development of ideas throughout the West, and his final section that sets forth continuing trends and issues. It should not be used alone, however, because the book fails to place the contemporary discussion in light of the full testimony of Scripture and early trinitarian traditions. Robert Letham's *The Holy Trinity in Scripture, History, Theology, and Worship* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2004) is one book that I would suggest be read prior to or alongside of this

one so that problems and questions that continue to surround the doctrine of the Trinity are given a proper context. That said, the work is well written and is a valuable addition to one's collection of works on the Trinity.

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By Faith Alone: Answering the Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification. Edited by G. L. W. Johnson and G. P. Waters. Wheaton: Crossway, 2006, 219 pp., \$17.99.

Here is one more book to add fire to the flames of controversy. To be accurate, this volume should have been entitled "Answering *Two* Challenges to the Doctrine of Justification," because there is much that is not addressed that needs to be addressed—given the audience for which this collection of essays was specifically written. More importantly, for a book attempting to shed light on this fierce debate today among evangelical and Reformed interpreters of Scripture, it fails (some of the reasons for this judgment are provided below).

What is quite apparent in reading this work, one intended to be a defense of the historic Reformed faith, is that it falls short of its mark. Neither consensus nor clear-headed understanding of the issues can be found with any degree of consistency. (And that is exceedingly disappointing, given the prospect the editors held out to me personally.) Subtleties and ambiguities in formulation help explain how theological error has penetrated so deeply into evangelical Protestant-Reformed teaching in recent years. It is also, in part, the consequence of an unwillingness to clarify and to modify (scholastic) Reformed teaching where that is demanded. Such is the contention of my thirty-plus years of study on this subject, first begun at Westminster in Philadelphia.

The voices we hear in *By Faith Alone* come largely from the Westminster Seminary community. David Wells of Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and Albert Mohler of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary provide the "Foreword" and "Afterword," respectively. These help give the book a broader appeal—and that is most welcome. Wells wastes no time to sound the alarm concerning the credibility and vitality of evangelical theology in the years that lie ahead. The situation looks very bleak indeed. And Mohler concurs. In between sage words by these two highly respected theologians and churchmen lie nine essays, preceded by an "Introduction" by one of the editors of the book, Guy Waters. Principal topics are these: the "New Perspective" on Paul and the Mosaic law (notably, the work of N. T. Wright), the imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification, the peculiar teachings of the "Auburn Theology School" (which is doubtless unfamiliar to those outside the Westminster community), and the distinctively Reformed doctrine of the covenant of works (the covenant established by God in creation and "republished," in part, in the giving of the Law through Moses and that constitutes Israel as the theocratic people of God in ancient, pre-messianic times).

Symptomatic of the ill health of the (evangelical) church is the near total abandonment of—or disregard for—the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone. From the vantage point of the history of Protestantism and from testimony to the heroic stand of Martin Luther and other stalwarts of the faith, it is utterly shocking that evangelicals today find themselves in the current state of confusion and disbelief. What has gone wrong? Many well-intentioned pastors and church leaders are not seeing enough results among the flock (i.e. good works), hence the attractiveness of the New Perspective and its variants calling for *faith and works* in the procurement of one's salvation. To be sure, there is nothing new here in the history of Christianity in general and in

the history of Reformed churches in particular. Assaults on the biblical teaching concerning justification by faith alone are legion. With regard to the present circumstance, Wells comments: "What is different, when compared with our more recent history, is that these aberrant views on matters so central and fundamental are not outside the evangelical church but inside it" (p. 19).

The remainder of this book review turns our attention to the pivotal issues in the present-day dispute regarding justification by faith, apart from the works of the law. What is the significance of the juxtaposition of faith and works in justification? What precisely are "works of the law"? More basically, how are we to construe the reference to "Law" as opposed to "Gospel," and how do Moses and Christ relate as covenant mediators? What is the human instrument(s) receiving the righteousness of Christ in soteric justification? And how does this relate to the sovereign working of God in the salvation of sinners? The answer to these questions requires careful exegetico-theological interpretation of the text of Scripture, especially the writings of the apostle Paul. Unfortunately, we do not have a great deal of this in *By Faith Alone*. Rather, we hear time and again a *confessional* affirmation of what Reformed theology has taught. There is merit in hearing the testimony of the Reformed church—or what remains of it today! At the same time, however, we understand that church tradition stands under the scrutiny of the Word of God. Calvinistic theology, true to its history, is reformed and reforming according to the light of Scripture. So, we need to hear from Scripture.

One of the critical texts in the current dispute is found in the second chapter of Romans. Even those who stand opposed to the Shepherd-(Gaffin) version of the New Perspective are not agreed on the exegesis of this important passage of Scripture. Cornelis Venema writes: "Some authors of the New Perspective appeal to Romans 2:13 in support of the idea of a yet-future justification. . . . The reformational reading of this text takes it as a kind of 'hypothesis contrary to fact'" (p. 58, n. 55). This assertion does an injustice to the controversy, specifically, to those who insist that Scripture speaks for itself (i.e. we do not impose our understanding on Scripture). It is here that reformational teaching may well need correction. (For the record, I do not commend the New Perspective interpretation as summarized by Venema, but I do challenge the hypothetical view.) Romans 2:13 speaks of two classes of people, viz., the regenerate and the unregenerate. What this text does not tell us is *how* the "doers of the law" are justified. That we learn elsewhere in Romans and other portions of the NT.) At the very least we are safe in saying that the notion of a second (or future) justification is wholly contrary to biblical teaching.

T. David Gordon frankly acknowledges that more study has led him to reconsider N. T. Wright's work. He now finds it highly deficient. Gordon is to be commended for his honest acknowledgment. He locates Wright's failure "to relate the Abrahamic story *back* to the Adamic story [thus rendering] his view of Paul incomplete at best and erroneous at worst" (p. 62). One caveat—and an important one, given the attention Wright has properly given to typology in Scripture: Gordon claims that through most of Israel's history, "she was *not* justified; to the contrary, she was judged to be in violation of God's law and covenant again and again by the prophets, beginning with Moses. Thus, Israel can be and was (at least during the Sinai administration) the *un*justified people of God. This strikes me as virtually irrefutable" (p. 73). In this opinion Gordon is mistaken. A covenantal-typological reading of theocratic Israel tells us otherwise (see, e.g., the imprecatory Psalms). The essay by Fowler White and Calvin Beisner attempts to unravel the symbolico-typological message of the Bible. Though sympathetic to their cause, I have a number of reservations and differences with their exposition. The new idea(s) introduced (what the authors call their "fresh" approach) is not helpful, but confusing. Here I have in mind their take on the commandments of Moses (= the Law) versus the commission to Abraham (= the Promise); also their identification of Noah, Abraham,

and David as “mediators” of the covenant of grace. Simply put, the law/gospel antithesis has reference to two contrasting principles of inheritance—works and faith. In addition, the authors confuse ontological and economic distinctions in their doctrine of the covenant of redemption and the covenant of grace as concerns the work of Christ as divine mediator.

The second essay by Gordon is the more significant of the two, especially for the Westminster community of scholars. Gordon (among others writing elsewhere) has the raw courage to question the views of John Murray. Here, too, he is to be commended for the open stance he has taken. Gordon reminds us that Murray’s teaching, like that of all others (with the exception of the biblical writers) is not inerrant. In my view, this is the greatest virtue of *By Faith Alone*, taken as a whole. Gordon has come to see that the source of New Westminster’s deviant teaching lies partly in the views of Murray regarding the divine covenants. “Murray’s ‘recasting’ of covenant theology *per se* remains unopen to discussion in Reformed circles; yet, in my judgment, his recasting has generated several other important divergences from the historic Reformed tradition: the views of Shepherd and Bahnsen, paedocommunion, and now Auburn theology. Murray himself embraced none of these errors” (p. 123). At this point I would commend for Gordon’s close reading and study my trilogy, climaxing in *Federalism and the Westminster Tradition: Reformed Orthodoxy at the Crossroads* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006). A critique of Murray’s work has been pervasive in my own writings. Beyond the fact that Gordon decries the widespread silence respecting the views of Murray within the Westminster community, the silence respecting the heterodox teaching of Gaffin is equally disturbing and without justification.

Both Richard Phillips and C. FitzSimons Allison address the doctrine of imputation, noting how it is undermined in the thinking of Robert Gundry and N. T. Wright. Neither of these two contributors, however, probe deeply enough in the controverted issues as raised in the current literature. It is not enough to espouse the imputation of Christ’s (active and passive) obedience. Both Richard Gaffin and Paul Rainbow, for example, do so, but then they add good works—the (non-meritorious) works of faith—to the formula of justification by faith alone. (See my review of their two recent books in a previous issue of the *Journal*.) This aspect of the discussion introduces us to the single, most critical element in the current dispute, namely, the theological concept of “merit” in the procurement of justification/(final) approbation. And it is at this very point that needed consensus is lacking in this collection of essays. Co-editor Waters asserts: “[Federal Vision] arguments against the covenant of works often illegitimately equate *works* and *merit*. In other words, objecting to the claim that Adam’s obedience in the first covenant was to be ‘meritorious,’ they therefore dismiss the *works* principle of the first covenant. But such a conclusion does not follow. Many Reformed theologians, firmly committed to the confessional doctrine of the covenant of works, maintain its *works* principle without speaking of the obedience required of Adam in terms of merit” (p. 30). Here, in no uncertain terms, is where Reformed dogmaticians today are obliged to reconsider the teaching of Scripture. In the pages of this book some contributors do offer a glimmer of hope, and for that we are most grateful.

In conjunction with the aspect of meritorious accomplishment regarding the federal headship of the First and Second Adams is the crucial matter of *probation*, as that informs every covenant-of-works arrangement in the Bible. The idea of probation is another non-negotiable in mature Reformed covenant theology. Unfortunately, clear teaching on this element of doctrine is lacking in David VanDrunen’s essay. More serious and deficient, however, is the essay by John Bolt, who adopts the Barthian construct of *law in grace* (or *grace in law*). What this theological perspective entails is the wholesale rejection of the Protestant-Reformed antithesis between the “Law” and the “Gospel.” (Bolt falsely appeals to Murray’s teaching to buttress his argument. The fact is, deficient though Murray’s formulations are, they have been greatly misused and

abused by the *radical* revisionists.) In addition, Bolt's discussion of the Sabbath—as that informing the nature and meaning of the covenant relationship itself—likewise misses the mark. His appeal to the views of Meredith Kline is likewise mistaken.

Some brief, closing remarks are in order. The last essay by Gary Johnson, co-editor of *By Faith Alone*, seems misplaced in this volume, and his note of appreciation for the theology of Karl Barth is thoroughly inappropriate in this context (p. 197, n. 10). Several theologians in this collection of articles are misidentified: Moisés Silva, Richard Gaffin, and John Piper all espouse a new approach to Paul and the Law, one that calls for a revision of traditional theological exegesis. To one degree or another, their position(s) undermines the Reformed doctrine of the covenant of works (a doctrine Piper explicitly denies). The controversial work of Norman Shepherd barely receives mention. What is to be gained in this strategy? Gordon wonders why the Federal Visionists did not consult Gaffin. The answer is, they did! (For the record, Gaffin and Wright were featured speakers at the 2005 Auburn Conference. Gaffin's lectures were subsequently published in *"By Faith, Not By Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation"* [Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2006].)

Parenthetically, both the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in America have issued reports on justification: *Justification: A Report from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (The Committee on Christian Education of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 2007) and "Report of the Ad Interim Study Committee on Federal Vision, New Perspective and Auburn Avenue Theologies" (issued in 2007 and accessed at the PCA's website: www.byfaithonline.com). The latter is superior for its conciseness and for its theological consistency. It is personally gratifying to read the position adopted by the authors of this study on justification; obviously, they did their homework. (The report, however, is deficient in supplying bibliographical sources upon which the conclusions of the report rest.) Most recently, the faculty of the theological department (the biblical department sees matters quite differently) of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia has issued its latest take on the controversy in the book entitled *Justified in Christ: God's Plan for Us in Justification* (K. S. Oliphint, ed. [Ross-shire: Mentor, 2007]). At best, the doctrine of justification remains elusive in some of these essays, notably that of Richard Gaffin. Lacking is due consideration to the distinctives of Reformed federal theology, specifically, the doctrine of the covenant of works (including the traditional law/gospel contrast and the doctrine of probation). These crucial aspects of the debate are slighted in this volume.

One can only hope and pray that a book like *By Faith Alone* will stimulate further, deeper study of the controverted issues facing the Reformed churches today. Unless the lingering differences, which continue to divide orthodox expositors of the Word of God, are addressed openly and frankly (including discussion of the role and impact of the writings of John Murray), there is little hope for a strong, uncompromising witness to the gospel of Christ. God grant us wisdom and discernment for our times. Without it the church of the Reformation will continue its move back to the dark ages, when the light of the gospel was obscured, if not denied altogether.

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The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus. By Amy-Jill Levine. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2006, 250 pp., \$24.95.

Amy-Jill Levine is a Jewish professor of New Testament Studies at a Protestant institution, Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Her goal in this book is to further

mutual understanding between Jews and Christians, without either side needing to “sacrifice their particular beliefs on the altar of interfaith sensitivity” (p. 6). In fact, she excels at communicating warmly, even entertainingly, which are assets in any dialogue.

A case in point is the introduction. Here Levine proves to be delightfully vulnerable and engaging about her own upbringing. As she recounts her childhood, she notes that because, according to her mother, Pope John XXIII was “good for the Jews.” Levine “immediately decided I would be pope: it meant lots of spaghetti, great accessories, and the job was good for the Jews. ‘I want to be pope,’ I announced to my mother. ‘You can’t,’ she replied. ‘You’re not Italian.’ Clearly, for a variety of reasons, I was in desperate need of instruction regarding the relationship between church and synagogue.” Levine sets the reader at ease, and the book continues that way with much honest insight. Levine wants to build bridges, and mostly she writes with both sympathy and charity.

Levine is spot on about one thing, and at that one thing she excels. The church indeed has an unfortunate track record of anti-Semitic acts and attitudes. Even in the modern world, it is all too easy to read the NT in ways that, out of ignorance or otherwise, reflect anti-Jewish thinking. Levine therefore begins (Chapter One, “Jesus and Judaism”) by situating Jesus as a Jew, within a Jewish milieu. Though not everyone will agree with her particular exegesis, she is right to emphasize the context of Jesus’ teachings in relationship to the Torah, the method of teaching through parables shared by the rabbis and Jesus, and the Jewish background to the Lord’s Prayer.

By contrast, Chapter Two, “From Jewish Sect to Gentile Church,” is the least rewarding chapter, providing a not very satisfactory account of the course of early church history and thought. Reflecting older, non-conservative views, she maintains that the early Christians expected Jesus to return any day; when he did not, they reinterpreted their beliefs to accommodate reality, a sort of theology by hindsight. Moreover, the focus on Jesus’ person as opposed to his ethics developed only as the gospel went to Gentiles. Furthermore, Paul turned Jesus into a “gentile Savior” (p. 66)—though she also writes that “the claim that Paul somehow invented Christianity by repackaging the message of Jesus for Gentiles ignores Zechariah’s vision of the Gentiles streaming to Zion as *Gentiles*” (p. 85; emphasis original). Thus, in her view, Christianity is a mix of extreme apocalypticism and adaptation to the Gentile world, though she vacillates on the latter.

In this chapter, Levine’s tone gets breezy at times, part of her charm as a communicator perhaps, but to the point of seeming to trivialize both church history and theology. For example: “Only the train conducted by Paul, the one in which distinction between Jews and Gentiles is erased, will pull into the heavenly station” (p. 82). This may be engaging in its own way, but in contrast to how she writes elsewhere, it is not sympathetic history-writing.

Chapter Three (“The New Testament and Anti-Judaism”) is more satisfying, with much to both agree and disagree. Levine offers a good discussion of what “anti-Jewish” means. She focuses here on 1 Thess 2:14–16 (“the Jews, who killed the Lord Jesus and oppose everyone”); Matt. 27:25 (“His blood be on us and on our children”); and John 8:44 (“You are from your father the devil”). In each case, Levine claims that neither history nor authorial intent can resolve whether a passage is “anti-Jewish”—all one can speak to is how the text has been heard: “Only the theologian can firmly pronounce a New Testament text *not* anti-Jewish” (p. 110; emphasis original). Evangelicals will not agree with her marginalizing the place of history nor with her hermeneutic that dismisses the author, but they will fully agree that we can work to eliminate anti-Semitic perceptions from the reading of the NT.

Chapter Four (“Stereotyping Judaism”) addresses what Levine considers to be seven misperceptions of first-century Judaism, the propagation of each of which serves to “make Jesus relevant” (p. 125) by way of contrast with an imagined Judaism. Evan-

gelicals would undoubtedly agree with some of her assertions and disagree with others. For instance, one “misperception” is that “all Jews wanted a warrior messiah who would defeat Rome; therefore, ‘the Jews’ rejected Jesus because he taught the way of peace.” Whether this is a stereotype or an accurate picture is one issue; another is her curious reduction of the stumbling block of the crucifixion to teaching “the way of peace,” part of Levine’s pattern of reducing the gospel to, well, a stereotype. Interesting, too, is her conviction that rendering “Jew” as “Judean” in John’s Gospel makes for a “*Judenrein*” Gospel devoid of Jews altogether. That conviction might perplex those evangelicals who would opt for “Judean” as a way to be exegetically faithful and to eliminate anti-Semitism from NT readings. But it becomes clear that Levine is reacting to recent non-evangelical scholarship, that is, to the contention that Jesus was neither a Jew nor a Judean but a “Galilean.” And she indicts the educational system by which, whether intended or not, anti-Jewish attitudes spread from the seminary and pulpit to the pew. Again, while the particulars of her argument will not commend themselves to everyone, her overall thrust and purpose place an important issue squarely on the agenda.

Chapter Five (“With Friends Like These . . .”) further situates Levine’s theological opponents within the world of liberal Christianity. She takes on liberation theology, the World Council of Churches, and third-world theologians who wrongly paint first-century Judaism as a world of taboos (wherein “rabbinic” education led to sexism) or who situate Jesus in a modern marginalized culture *du jour* rather than in his historical first-century context. She also decries those who play off the God of the Old and of the New Testaments, Marcion-style. With her provision of actual quotes and examples, I found this particular chapter enlightening and one with which I found myself largely in agreement.

Chapter Six (“Distinct Canons, Distinct Practices”) is meant to show that the church and synagogue are on parallel but distinct tracks. For Levine, while a theological consensus is not possible, the very recognition of the separateness of the two faiths facilitates fruitful dialogue, for we are “freed from the compulsion to reach common ground” (p. 191). In service of underscoring the separateness of the two, she spends a number of pages arguing against the practice of holding Christian Passover seders, reasoning on textual, historical, and theological grounds that this is part of the Jewishness of Jesus that Christians should *not* claim for themselves. The dual tracks, she notes, will converge one day; after all, she writes, the goal of church and synagogue is the same, and eventually “the two cars pull into the same station, and they have the same stationmaster there to welcome them” (p. 213).

Lastly, Chapter Seven (“Quo Vadis?”) comprises an A to Z of practical suggestions. Some are spot on: “Be cautious of any statement beginning ‘All Jews think . . .’” Others simply reiterate her preconceived ideas of what really happened in history; specifically, her views on the production of the NT. As for her suggestion for dialogue that should “address why Jesus died,” she answers that it was “because a man being proclaimed ‘king’ in Roman-occupied Jerusalem was a political liability” (p. 222). It is hard to square that piece of advice with interfaith dialogue in which each side is supposed to uphold its own beliefs. Christian evangelism of Jews is treated with a degree of understanding—she denies that it is done out of ill motives—but her advice is that the “best means of evangelizing is to act, rather than to preach or go door-to-door” (p. 224).

For evangelicals, one piece of advice is not addressed by Levine: to eliminate reading anti-Semitism in the NT, it is helpful to recognize that the gospel depiction of OT Israel, the Pharisees, and so on needs to be read as “us,” not “them”—not in a supersessionist sense whereby the church replaces Israel, but in the sense of personal application. At the traditional Jewish Passover, one piece of liturgy deals with four kinds of sons, two of whom are particularly apropos here. The wise son is deemed wise because he includes himself, saying, “What do these ceremonies mean that the Lord commanded *us* to

observe?" The wicked son, by contrast, divorces himself from the group: "What do these things mean that the Lord commanded *you* to observe?" Though it would probably not sit well with Levine, who wants Christians and Jews to remain on their separate tracks, from the standpoint of the Christian canon, all those things were written down for our learning and personal application. No surer way exists to diminish thinking of the "other" than to include oneself.

Now for the larger problems that color the book. These are not unique to Levine; rather, they show that she is situated within the contemporary milieu of thought.

First, in typical postmodern fashion, Levine is not very sanguine on the possibility of historical knowledge but focuses rather on sociology and the possibility of multiple readings of a text. "Whether Jesus *was* a or the messiah is another question, and that can be answered only by the voice of faith, not by the voice of the historian" (pp. 85–86; emphasis original); this is a typical sentiment of hers expressed in the book. Levine is in tension here: if history is ultimately indecisive as to faith, why include a chapter outlining the history of the early church? Why say that Matthew 27 is historically suspect (p. 99)? The answer is that Levine rightly wants to invoke history to show how and why Christian anti-Semitism developed. But when it comes to Jesus' claims and the claims of Christians today, she suddenly makes history take a back seat to communal and personal readings. As she notes, "[T]he question of whether the New Testament is anti-Jewish ends in personal assessment of the arguments, and so it ends in stalemate" (p. 102). Does Levine mean that we cannot know for sure what the NT writers meant? Or does it not matter to her because it is the reader's response that is decisive? Here she is not clear.

She makes all of this explicit later on: "Historical-critical work can be very helpful in eliminating some of the negative interpretations. . . . But the historical arguments remain speculative. Further, historical arguments risk being compromised, because they presume that the 'original' audience or the 'original intent' determines the meaning" pp. 115–16). Thus, she concludes: "The only resolution to the question of New Testament anti-Judaism cannot come from historians . . . [but] from theologians" (p. 116).

Not only is the book postmodern in its assessment of history and hermeneutics, it also reflects—despite Levine's good intentions—an ultimately secular view of life that fails to grasp the essential diagnosis of sin and the radical solution of the gospel; thus, it trivializes (and caricatures) the gospel message. So we find a revealing comment like this: "The message of soteriological exclusivity, particularly when accompanied by the threat of damnation, offends especially when it is proclaimed to little children or pronounced at a funeral for an agnostic" (pp. 89–90). She adds further: "Any number of Jews and others outside the Christian fold would have difficulty grasping the concept of a 'compassionate' deity who damns individuals for something they cannot control" (p. 90). As with her history, Levine's theology shows little sense that she attempted to tackle her subject with a degree of inner sympathy.

In fact, her survey of church history and her passing remarks on the gospel message are as stereotyped and as wrong as what some Christians think about Judaism. Two comments of my own here: First, there is not an equivalency: Christian stereotyping of Judaism and anti-Semitism have historically led to actual persecution, whereas Jewish stereotypes of Christianity have not had the same catastrophic results. Second, it is worth noting that what is today considered a stereotype was at one time not so considered even by Jewish scholars. For instance, generalizations of "Judaism" and "the rabbis" stem from a time when it was common to speak of "normative Judaism," a notion gleaned in part from Jewish scholarship.

Finally, in her smorgasbord of practical suggestions, Levine has placed herself in the curious role of instructing Christians what to think about evangelism, the death of Jesus, etc.—rather counter to her overall view of two parallel and separate tracks. Of

course, she has a self-admitted political motive in writing the books: "In other words, I am placing my scholarship in service to personal, pastoral, and even political ends. That, of course, makes me biased. But being biased is not the same thing as being wrong" (p. 5). But what would she think if Christians wrote a book on interfaith dialogue that concludes that the best way to be Jewish is to seek converts to Judaism, or suggests that the role of Moses is not what Jews have traditionally thought it was. Again, despite her best intentions, Levine often creates a caricature of church history and the content of the gospel, both of which evangelicals would wish to correct. Nevertheless, I suspect that Levine would be most open to listening. And, in the end, what she does best is to point out that there are problems with anti-Jewish and anti-Semitic readings of the NT, and those problems need to be addressed.

In her postmodernism and her view of the gospel, Levine reflects the thinking of many in a secularized and postmodern world. What makes her approach distinctly Jewish is that she wishes to combat anti-Semitism and a de-Judaization of Christianity. This book could profitably be read by seminary students, pastors, academics, and lay people, for two important reasons: First, in order to understand a representative modern Jewish view of Jesus and the NT (and so to hear what some Jews are saying), and second, in order to take it to heart and so help diminish anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish attitudes in the church (and so to help educate the church). As I write, Rabbi Michael Cook of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, is preparing a book on the NT for a Jewish audience. We can expect that the NT, Jesus, and anti-Semitism will more frequently become talking points in the Jewish community. This book will help prepare its readers to engage that conversation intelligently.

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Early New England: A Covenanted Society. By David A. Weir. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005, xviii + 460 pp., \$34.00 paper.

That the early colonies in New England were founded upon covenantal relationships is well known. How those covenants worked at the most basic level in regards to the colonies, cities, and churches, however, remains hidden in untold obscure organizational documents—documents such as the more famous Mayflower Compact, but much less accessible to the average reader. That is, until now. David Weir's excellent *Early New England: A Covenanted Society* sheds much needed light on the foundational documents of colonial America, revealing the commonalities and the originality of these trailblazing sociopolitical pioneers and laying the groundwork for a generation of future studies.

"The seed of this volume appeared in 1992 as a [doctoral] dissertation devoted to the process of church formation in early New England" (p. ix). Weir earned the doctor of philosophy from Princeton University and another from the University of St. Andrews. His first book, *The Origins of the Federal Theology in Sixteenth-Century Reformation Thought* (Oxford University Press, 1990), was highly acclaimed. David Weir presently serves as professor of history at Nyack College, New York.

After researching countless colonial, town, and church covenants, Weir came to the conclusion that "the content of the early New England church and civil covenants reflected a counterpoint of unity and diversity" (pp. 3–4). The unity he finds in the concept of covenanting, a concept driven by the Puritan understanding of the OT and the old England roots of the founders. The diversity, he argues, manifests itself in the

covenanters' willingness to adopt old forms and create new ones in response to the individual situations of the various colonies, towns, and church gatherings. To prove his thesis, Weir handles the various covenants, secular and sacred, at length according to their kind and historical context in chapters singularly dedicated to each genre.

Before addressing the foundational covenants of early New England (those related to the founding of the various colonies themselves), Weir dedicates a helpful, opening chapter to the European background, surveying the basic presuppositions that informed the earliest settlers. Doing so, he makes his first argument for unity. "Most early New Englanders," he notes, "thought like the Europeans that they were" (p. 15). He further argues that all of the early settlements except Rhode Island adopted the church/state relationship patterns of their homeland. Tracing the rise of the dissenting movements of England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, as well as their Calvinistic theological commitments, Weir sets the socio-political stage for their final removal to the New World to establish what in their minds was the ideal that was abandoned mid-stream in the English Reformation. They came, he writes, "to establish a new England" (p. 23).

Moving from context to application, Weir next surveys the colonial charters of the original settlements from the Virginia Charter (1606) to the reestablishment of the Massachusetts Bay charter (1691). He rightfully contends that these documents reveal unity and diversity, through both the English character of their content and the changing nature of the geopolitical situation, as they move from reformation to civil war to intolerance to the final victory of religious tolerance, each colony seemingly setting its own course according to the religious vision of its founders and not that of the homeland. The Virginia charter, for instance, assumes a common theological framework, a framework left unstated in the document. That approach would not last, however. By the time that Gorges Grant is given by Charles I, the religious situation had changed in England to such an extent that the new colony to be established in modern-day Maine would be legally and religiously Anglican. Then, even while England was busy ejecting the dissenters in their own midst, the crown permitted Rhode Island to be established by a charter wherein "nothing is mentioned concerning the religious life of the populace, nor is there any mention of Christianity specifically or of the governance of the church or churches located in the region" (p. 51). Even the administration of Sir Edmund Andros, a royally-ordained attempt to return the colonies ideologically to the English fold, exercised a certain laxity toward religious nonconformity, allowing Congregationalism to exist side-by-side with the newly ascendant Anglicanism that he promoted. The latter years of the seventeenth century reveal that very diversity provided the unity, the common thread that ran through the early New England covenants as the various colonies reestablished themselves after Andros's departure, each addressing the relationship between the church and the state according to its own vision. "Indeed, [freedom in matters of religion] was the only policy concerning religion, church, and state that united all of the colonies after 1692" (p. 72).

Civil covenants were those that "established local civil government" (p. 74). As with colonial charters, civil covenants reveal patterns of diversity and unity. Unity is found in the desires of the various communities to preserve Christian ideals as determined by their Christian founders. Diversity can be seen not only in what those ideals were understood to be but also in the format of the covenant itself; indeed, there was "no uniform model that all of them follow" (p. 74). As Weir helpfully illustrates, the primary model in the early years of colonization was that of the combination or compact. Combinations or compacts such as the Mayflower Compact sought to establish government on the local level with no external authority to which it could appeal. As one would surmise, such documents were the predominant form of civil covenant in the early decades of colonization. With the gradual establishment of strong colonial centers of

authority acting on their own, however, charters, patents, and legislative statutes replaced the combination or compact as the norm. In this model, authority flowed down from the central colonial government, thus legitimizing the local government. This form of unity increased as the century wore on.

Diversity in the civil covenants can also be seen, Weir notes, in the manner in which they addressed the role of the sacred in the secular. The Mayflower Compact betrayed a desire to evidence "allegiance to the standing order of Old England and its king" (p. 84); thus, the church was to play an essential role in fulfilling the colony's "nationalistic purpose." Biblical monotheism, as defined by the Church of England and upheld by the Puritan Separatists, was the unwritten expectation placed upon all in the community. The New Haven Colony approached its civil government with the central goal of establishing and maintaining a pure church in contradistinction to that under the control of Archbishop Laud (p. 94). The Bible, not English precedent, served as the standard by which all conduct, civil and private, was to be measured. Therefore, only practicing Christians who conformed to the doctrine of the established church, the "spiritual elite," could serve the community in legislative roles (p. 100). The Providence Plantation under Roger Williams represented a significant shift in the nature of civil covenants. Here, seeking the religious tolerance Williams desired, the first "secular" form of government was established. However, even in Providence the expectation was that the Christian ethic would necessarily influence the governance of the community. The town of Rehoboth moved the New Englanders even further away from the centrality of an established church that single-handedly controlled secular affairs. In 1667, as a response to the establishment of a second church, a Baptist congregation, the town granted that the legal status of local churches should be the purview of the local, not the colonial, government. Thus, Weir maintains, "there was not singular 'New England Mind' concerning the civil magistracy or its specific foundational conceptualization" (p. 133).

While diversity can be seen among early church covenants in the seventeenth century (with each congregation writing its own), unity existed as well. In fact, this unity epitomizes Weir's definition of a church covenant: "Church covenants were brief and pithy documents that emerged from an elaborate theological schema that encompassed all of biblical history" (p. 170). This unity, he maintains, is seen in certain patterns and themes that can be discerned in these documents, as well as in a "consistent structure and similar theology for all of the early New England covenanting churches" (p. 150). This consistency is seen most clearly among the Congregationalist churches. The "formulary" followed by most churches included: the preamble, identifying the purpose of the church and the witnesses to its founding; a consummation of the founding and subsequent members' relationship with God, Christ, and one another, as well as an indication of the method of governance; and a conclusion with a plea for God's further blessing (p. 170). Further, covenantal obligations and responsibilities did not end with the founding generation but were passed down through the generations; thus, the many jeremiads preached concerning the "rising generation." This unity ("the standing order" as Weir calls it) transcended colonial borders and years, maintaining a semblance of common cause throughout the first century in New England.

Unity did not prevail, however. Just as dissent brought about change in both colonial and civil covenants, dissenters changed the content of church covenants as well. Following the Restoration of Charles II and the rise of moderate religious tolerance, dissenting groups were on the ascendance in old and New England. Among those groups in the colonies were the Baptists, the Quakers, and the Anglicans. Interestingly, the Anglicans established their congregations without the use of a covenant due to their connection with the standing order in England and the lengthy conflict against the Scottish Covenanters during this same time period. Likewise, the Quakers did not covenant in the same manner as their Congregational neighbors; instead, their theological predilections

led them to emphasize the individual and the spiritual. Unlike the previous two dissenting groups, however, the Baptists did covenant at both the civil and ecclesial levels. The key difference between these covenants and those of the Congregationalists unsurprisingly relates to the nature of the membership covered under the covenant. The Congregationalists counted all baptized individuals in the community as members, regardless of their spiritual condition. Baptists, on the other hand, practiced a form of polity that counted among their membership only those who had experienced conversion and subsequent believer's baptism. In these churches, covenantal activity came only after entrance into the community by way of conversion and baptism. The emphasis in Baptist covenants, then, is one of horizontal relationships among peers rather than vertical relationships between the human and the divine.

Finally, the diversity seen in and promulgated by the dissenters led to one more change in the standing order: churches began to rely more heavily on written confessions of faith. Weir suggests three reasons for this. First, New England Puritans themselves allowed for diversity of beliefs in their own statements. As the relationship between church and states changed (as seen above in the colonial covenants), confessions were also modified to address the changing political climate. The Cambridge Platform and the Savoy Declaration represented two such confessions that sought to clarify both faith and polity in light of shifting political ideologies and the presence of religious diversity. Second, the Restoration in old England brought mandatory tolerance even in the colonies. Of particular importance to those reacting to this change was the spiritual education of their children and their desire to protect the purity of the church from encroaching theological variety. Third, local congregations drew up their own statements of faith to defend themselves from perceived enemies. Two diverse groups, the Baptists and the Congregationalists, began to use confessions of faith to define the parameters of their fellowships. The former used them proactively to defend their orthodoxy against the complaints of the established church; the latter used them reactively to expunge unorthodox teaching from their midst. Regardless of approach, by the end of the era, religious hegemony was on the wane and "the beginnings of heterogeneity began to appear" (p. 220).

Weir offers a concluding chapter that helpfully summarizes his premise, evidence, and conclusions. In the end, his argument proves true. Utilizing the biblical notion of covenant and beginning with unity, "New England was only able to sustain its experiment for two generations" before external influences, most notably those arriving from Old England, set in motion events that would instigate and promote the very diversity the Puritans had fled the motherland to avoid (p. 242). As Weir puts it, "The New England Puritans had now become Anglicized Yankees" (p. 242).

While the task of summarizing Weir's broad research and conclusions, as I have tried above, is difficult at best, evaluating its value is quite easy. The author has done a magnificent job of locating and analyzing hundreds of covenants. He has dissected them for readers, providing key content and insightful interaction with the salient points of those he isolates as representatives of a larger cross-section. Moreover, he gives readers a number of clear and concise charts that serve to illustrate his point well. Finally, for students of American history who either choose to challenge his conclusions (as certainly some disciples of Perry Miller will) or wish to delve deeper, Weir has kindly provided two in-depth appendices and a bibliographic essay directing readers to the very sources that he worked so hard to locate. In this way and so many others, Weir's work makes a valuable contribution to this field of study.

Clearly, this volume has much to commend it. Moreover, it leaves very little for readers to complain about unless they disagree with Weir's conclusions. However, for the sake of clarity and accessibility, one might wish that the author (or his editor)

had done more to draw clear delineations between the various covenants discussed in the individual chapters. Weir would have done a great service to his readers by providing clear subheads to outline the flow of his argument at a quick glance. Such an addition would also aid others who may approach this volume as a reference tool for further research. Unfortunately, as it is, Weir's smooth writing style and effortless transitions leave readers scouring the pages to identify each subsequent covenant as it appears. Otherwise, this is a very fine volume that adds much to our knowledge of this formative period in American history.

Brooks Holifield has called this book "the most detailed study of the civil and church covenants of colonial New England." Edwin Gaustad heaps further praise on Weir, saying, "[T]his book [is] as close to the last word on the subject as it seems possible to get." As it turns out, both are right. Weir has done his homework, and his work deserves their high praise.

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Distinctively Baptist: Essays on Baptist History. Marc A. Jolley and John D. Pierce, eds. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005, 306 pp., \$45.00.

This *Festschrift* was written in honor of Walter Shurden, who showed a widespread commitment to the freedom model of Baptist identity with an unsure hand extended to diversity, to all except "fundamentalists." According to the Foreword, Shurden has "helped historically aware, nonfundamentalist Baptists to navigate the tricky waters of change following that painful loss of a long-held identity."

Bill Leonard and William Brackney have essays in this *Festschrift*, along with fourteen other friends, colleagues, and students of Shurden. Leonard targets the mission movement as promoted by Fuller and Carey as a major factor in changing the direction of Baptist theology and opening Baptists to consider the implications of pluralism in a global society. Brackney looks at the attempt of Baptists to achieve a stable identity through continuity in several discreet arenas of thought and practice: praxis, confessional tradition, organizational structure, identification with prominent leaders, historiography (that is, the question of origins), an assumed theological tradition, educational traditions, and ecclesiology. The result, of course, is that great diversity characterizes Baptist attempts to affirm continuity.

Charles Dewese affirms the usefulness of Baptist history as a ministry to remind Baptists of their focus on freedom. Knowledge of history will thwart the "Baptist identity theft" that thrives in Baptist life today. This may be accomplished by uncovering the biblical foundation for "soul competency, liberty of conscience, the priesthood of all believers, voluntarism, believer's baptism, missions, congregational self-government, and other biblical and Baptist patterns" (pp. 72–73). A "Baptist identity theft" did indeed occur in the twentieth-century, but the conservatives were not the purloiners.

Edwin Gaustad, chagrined by what he thinks is a gross indifference ("scorn" is his term) to history among many current Baptists, accuses them of "bibliolatry." "The Southern Baptist Convention," he argues, "has recently found history to be an awkward embarrassment" (p. 40). I would suggest that, on the contrary, history has been the single most potent friend of Southern Baptists in their movement toward a full recovery of Baptist identity.

Lloyd Allen writes about the Welsh piety of Morgan Edwards, an eighteenth-century Baptist preacher/historian. Allen claims that although Edwards, a Calvinist, “knew his theology,” he did not “live by it as the foundation for his devotion or his ecclesiology.” Instead, he embraced the more poetic and affective religious strain of Celtic Christianity, thus creating room for unity in the midst of broad diversity. Though Edwards’s vision fell on deaf ears in the Philadelphia Association, “it might give hope to those who wish to embody a wholistic, lived faith in a postmodern landscape where regional practice matters as much or more than the affirmation of universal doctrinal certainties” (pp. 189, 192). How much better could the moderate mentality be stated?

Doug Weaver’s study of Second Baptist Church of Atlanta calls attention to a decline in the importance of confessions, Calvinism, and church discipline. At the same time, the church increased in its participation and support of missions and the entire Southern Baptist denominational program. Program, not purity or truth—any questions?

Perhaps the strangest and yet most characteristic of the essays points to Robert Robinson’s view of liberty of conscience. Karen Smith sees him as paradigmatic of the Baptist vision of radical freedom and radical diversity. “Over the years,” she observes, “the emphasis on religious liberty has led many Baptists to suggest that diversity of belief rather than uniformity of opinion is the Baptist way.” She then quotes Walter Shurden to that effect: “The Baptist denominational consciousness has been fostered more by the unity which comes from a commitment to diversity than by the unity which comes from uniformity” (p. 152). Smith highlights Robinson’s emphasis on freedom, that is, the “willingness of one Baptist to insist that no one has the right to impose religious ideas or practices on another.” Liberty means the right to be a Christian “but also implies liberty not to be a Christian” (p. 170). She insists that although Robinson clearly bolted from alignment with Baptists on several pivotal doctrinal ideas, his position was more truly Baptist than theirs. The right of private judgment in doctrine, private interpretation of Scripture, and freedom from confessional uniformity clearly expresses the Baptist view of religious liberty in Smith’s estimation and makes Robinson more of a Baptist than his orthodox critics.

Exactly what Smith wants the reader to conclude from this is uncertain. That Robinson believed people have a right not to be Christian merely expresses the historic Baptist position on church/state relationships derived from their commitment to the biblical model of a regenerate church. If we are required to conclude, per Smith, that this represents a bold and courageous stance, we must be forgiven if we are non-plussed. Robinson’s movement toward Unitarian theology most assuredly challenged “the accepted orthodoxy of many Baptists” (p. 170), but is this an expression of freedom that one may take and still be counted Baptist? Most puzzling are Smith’s parting words: “For Robinson, covenant life was not to be based on doctrinal agreement, but on the bond of love in Christ—a love which could only be truly known by individuals who were free to respond to it or, indeed, to reject it. Indeed liberty to be a Christian implies liberty not to be a Christian” (p. 170). Granted. But does Smith mean that Baptists, if they are real Baptists, must not intrude on another Baptist’s freedom by insisting that a mark of true Christianity is love for Christ? Must they accept the idea that one can be a Baptist while not wanting to be a Christian?

The best contribution, from a purely historical standpoint, is the essay on William Heth Whitsitt written by William E. Hull. He presents Whitsitt as an unlikely hero for the moderate party of Southern Baptists. After describing the post-mortem growth of Whitsitt’s mythological stature from character to crucifixion to courage, Hull unfolds the internal history of a tortured mind seeking to maintain as much secrecy as possible concerning his differences with his denominational constituency, many of whom he considered “bigots and fools.” Finally, the need to establish his scholarly hegemony in the

field of Baptist history drove him to publish what for year he had kept under wraps. The result was the resignation of Whitsitt from the presidency of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary under pressure from rivals in Louisville and the Landmark Southwest. Hull's interpretation of the event for the subsequent history of the Seminary and his adduction of lessons for controversy constitute one of the most fascinating parts of the book.

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Loves Me, Loves Me Not: The Ethics of Unrequited Love. By Laura A. Smit. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005, 265 pp., \$18.99 paper.

In contrast to what ideas the title may bring to mind, Laura Smit makes clear in the opening pages of *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* that "this is *not* a book about relationships" (p. 11). Rather, this book is an effort to explain how believers in the Lord Jesus are to deal with "a romantic attraction that is not returned" (p. 53)—unrequited love. The book is divided into three parts. Part one, the "Theology of Romance," claims the entire first half. In this section, Smit begins her discussion of love and singleness from the theological foundation of God's purposes for creation. These five chapters really serve as the heart of the book and thus will be given the greatest amount of attention in my review. While Part Two is brief in nature, consisting of only two chapters, the discussions of "Interactions with Culture" are nonetheless important for understanding how modern culture and technology has affected the current view of sexuality. The final three chapters of the book get straight to the realistic issues of unrequited love in discussing "Rejecting, Pursuing, and Recovering" relationships. In these final chapters, Smit makes very practical application to the difficult romantic situations with which individuals find themselves struggling regularly.

Before reading this review, it is helpful to understand that Laura Smit writes from the premise that singleness is good. In fact, Smit goes so far as to say that "the burden of proof is on the decision to marry, not the decision to remain single" (p. 77).

Although her arguments are driven by a specific theological viewpoint, Smit nevertheless relies heavily on the personal experience of individuals whom she interviewed in doing the research for this book. *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* is replete with the personal stories of people who have loved and lost, or those who have not returned love to someone. In the opening chapter of Part One, "God's Nature," Smit delves into a discussion of the fact that "love really is the heart of God's nature" (p. 25). Hence, one cannot react to a hurtful situation by seeking vengeance, being spiteful, or giving any related negative emotional response if one desires to honor God and act Christ-like in all areas of life. Moreover, it is not only the aspect of God's loving nature that sets the standard for emotional responses, but also the truth of his goodness. This truth of God's goodness, Smit explains, has great implications for how men and women are to handle broken relationships as well as deal with the singleness in their own lives. "If God is the cause behind our breakups, if God is the reason we are single, then the breakups are good, and singleness is good" (p. 27). Smit asserts that singleness may often be God's will for men and women, and if it is God's will, it is good—regardless of what one's personal desire may be.

Chapter two, "God's Plan for Creation," opens with a discussion of God's creation of Adam and Eve. Smit does a good job of putting the creation event of the first man and

woman in its redemptive-historical perspective, as she notes that “it is the incarnation of God in Christ that finally bridges the gap in a definitive way, for in Christ, God Himself became bone of our bones and flesh of our flesh” (p. 44). The physical body of Christ makes redemption for sinful mankind possible, and “the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God” (Rom 8:19 *ESV*). Therefore, the physical nature of Christ’s body, Smit points out, has important implications not only for redemption, but also for the sexuality of mankind—a point she will discuss in more detail later in the book.

On page 48, Smit enters into a discussion that will be controversial to certain biblical scholars. Rather than reading Gen 1:28 as a command, Smit sees this verse as God’s promise to the newly created man and woman to “bless their union, making their marriage a source of blessing both for themselves and for the rest of the earth” (p. 48). As will be seen in the chapters to follow, this point serves as a foundation for Smit’s view on singleness—a view that singleness should be the normative way of life rather than the exceptional. Smit ends this chapter by imagining what unrequited love would look like in a sinless creation. Relying much on Dante’s view of the subject, Smit notes that “the very fact that love is not returned, that there is a lack of satisfaction, would help the experience point beyond itself to God” (p. 60). Hence, unrequited love, handled properly, should serve to deepen individuals’ understanding of and service to God.

Chapter three takes the reins of chapter two and drives much deeper into a discussion of the new creation, including how to prepare for and anticipate its arrival. This chapter, entitled “God’s Plan for the New Creation,” may properly be seen as the pivotal point in the book due to how the author’s view on singleness is so clearly articulated and how that viewpoint provides the basis for the remainder of the chapters. Hence chapter three will be given an ample amount space and discussion.

The chapter begins with a strong eschatological focus, evident when Smit says, “As Christians, we not only evaluate our lives and culture in light of the creation order but also look forward to the eschatological order, the new creation as it will exist in its fullness when Christ returns” (p. 61). Positively, Smit does a good job of focusing readers’ attention on the anticipatory hope of Christ’s return and sovereign rule. And while it is true that all believers should orient their lives in the direction of this coming reality, the implications that Smit draws from this truth are somewhat provocative in light of the current Christian culture. While “our primary loyalties shift when we come into contact with Jesus” (p. 65), this does not negate the value or normative nature of marriage. Smit’s argument, however, relying heavily on the examples of the incarnational Christ and the apostle Paul, is that “marriage is the norm in Eden, but it will be obsolete in the New Jerusalem. Therefore, our communities of faith should be on a trajectory in which they reflect Eden less and less, and the New Jerusalem more and more” (p. 67).

For fear of misrepresenting her position on marriage, I must make it clear that Smit does not believe “that all Christians need to be single, but all Christians must come to terms with Jesus’ teaching that marriage is not ultimate” (p. 71). Thus, although it is certainly not wrong to marry, Christians should not assume this will be their lot in life. These lines, however, do get a little hazy as Smit continues to discuss the topic. For example, a few pages later, Smit makes the statement that “it does seem, however, that singleness must be the default choice for a Christian given the clear preference for singleness expressed in this text and in Jesus’ teachings” (p. 77). Smit believes that Christians would be able to serve God more faithfully, be less distracted from the gospel ministry, and more forward-looking to the eschatological kingdom if they were single. While these might all be true statements, the question remaining to be answered is how a default position of singleness lines up with the biblical emphasis of the responsibility and gift of having a family and raising children. In this chapter, Smit has not adequately presented a position of singleness within the framework of the entire biblical canon.

This negligence is noticed especially in the final paragraph of the chapter: "To hold on to the patterns of the old covenant in the face of Jesus' new work is to pour the new wine of the Gospel into old wineskins" (p. 83). Unfortunately, this statement leaves more questions unanswered than it does to answer the question at hand.

"Sin and our Romantic Lives" is the topic of the fourth chapter of this book. Sin is pervasive, and there is no doubt that in a sinless world, the romantic lives of men and women would be much different. Smit spends a great deal of time explaining how their fallen nature has led men and women to manipulate each other in romantic relationships. Rather than always thinking of one another and how to serve one's partner better, "men and women use one another . . . as a means toward meeting their own needs, born of desperation and insecurity" (p. 87), and this is caused by sin. Smit does a good job of connecting the romantic desires of individuals to their nature as sexual beings. Indeed, even in the creation account, the high priority God puts on the sexuality of humanity is evident as he designs Adam and Eve as sexual beings able to enjoy sex and reproduce. It is not sexuality that is the sin; rather, sin has affected the sexuality of men and women to the point that they exploit one another's emotions.

Smit continues chapter four by discussing how sin has further affected the equality of men and men. She appears to lean towards an egalitarian view of the roles of men and women, stating that "the creation order contained equality between men and women, but we live in an unequal world" (p. 96). This statement rings consistent with the egalitarian view that equality in the nature of men and women also means equality of their roles. This view often cites Gal 3:28 as a proof text that the gospel eliminates differences between men and women that are believed to be a result of the fall—differences in roles.

Finally, Smit offers a valuable discussion on the need for emotional modesty, because "just as a modest, Christian woman would never think of stripping off her clothes in front of a man on a first date, so she should never think of unveiling her entire emotional life" (p. 97). Moving beyond emotional discretion, Smit notes that men and women should also have discretion in regard to the type of personality with which they let themselves settle down, because "many of us have a type of person who is bad for us, but to whom we are attracted" (p. 101).

Chapter five, "Virtuous and Nonvirtuous Romance" has many similarities with chapter four in that Smit discusses how to best handle relationships in a most sinless manner, and contrasts what these two very different types of romance, virtuous and nonvirtuous, look like. As she notes, "This chapter looks at attitudes toward love that need to change if we are going to be prudent and virtuous in the way we handle romance" (p. 110). The first part deals mainly with the social expectations that are often connected to individuals' romantic aspirations. Smit makes the point that "we are responsible to shape our own romantic tastes to the extent that we can" (p. 119). The chapter concludes with a discussion on virtue and with a reminder that Christians should strive to be virtuous in all areas of life: "When grace is allowed to work, it will make us virtuous people," (p. 136), and we should desire virtue more than romance.

The second section of the book is short but nonetheless important for understanding what it means to be a sexual creature as well as the influence that the sexual nature has on one's romantic life. In fact, chapter six is a particularly strong chapter, giving explanation as to how "Embodiment and Sexual Identity" are connected. In the opening paragraph, Smit states that "we cannot understand romance unless we understand ourselves as both body and soul" (p. 139). This is a well-written statement, and she continues by stating that "it is precisely because God values our body and claims it that we need to be careful about what we do with it" (p. 143). Thus, before individuals can gain a proper view of sexuality, Smit points out, they must first understand what it means to be embodied beings. Moreover, Smit does an excellent job of discussing how individuals are to handle their sexuality in both mentally and physically responsible

ways. Ours is a culture with over-sexed media. For this reason, she points out the great need for discernment in the entertainment choices one makes, as such choices exert a strong impact on the way one views one's sexuality. The closing paragraph contains perhaps one of the strongest points about mental purity contained in the entire book. She states that "a Christian who has never been married should not be able to imagine the act of sex with any clarity" (p. 161). This statement seems almost unbelievable in today's modern world. It is nonetheless a strong reminder of what practical purity should look like in the Christian life, especially as it relates to the mental realm.

Chapter seven is mainly a continuation of its predecessor, with the discussion centering on the dangers of unhealthy romantic imagination. This applies not only to lustful imaginings, Smit notes, but also to the imagination of people or relationships that do not exist. An undisciplined, imaginative mind is certain to lead to an unrealistic view of life and relationships, and "when imagination stops being a tool for wondering about real life and becomes instead an escape from real life, it is being used inappropriately" (p. 174). Smit's focus on the need for healthy mental imaginings and a realistic view of life provides a perfect transition into the final section of her book.

Smit begins section three with a chapter on "Rejecting Love" and explains the difficulty that such a decision often brings, as "the community is . . . typically on the side of the pursuer" (p. 188). Chapter eight is more or less a discussion of the right that individuals have to remain single, evident by Smit's belief that "the burden of proof in any dating relationship is on the decision to say yes, not the decision to say no" (p. 194). While I concur that prudent choices are a necessity in healthy romantic relationships, I think Smit takes too much freedom in asserting that for Christians, "singleness should be the default option" (p. 189).

The topic of "Pursuing Love" in chapter nine discusses how those pursuing romance should handle themselves. While the author has included many real-life examples throughout the book, this chapter in particular is filled with story after story of those who have been interested in pursuing a romantic relationship with someone else. While there are some strong points made, such as the need to commit to kindness (p. 208), being equally yoked (p. 219), and avoiding gossip (p. 220), this chapter may be cited as the weakest in Smit's book simply due to the large amount of personal stories contained therein. While it is beneficial to hear of the mistakes and experiences of others, Smit could have easily taken this opportunity to expound on what biblical standards there are for pursuing a romantic relationship.

Finally, Smit concludes by talking about the "aftereffects" of unrequited love. This chapter in many ways is reminiscent of chapters four and five, as it includes direction on how to best handle oneself after a romantic dream is lost. The foundational point of this chapter is Smit's focus on the gospel. She rightly points out that the gospel puts all things into proper perspective: "The Christian life is not about the pursuit of happiness, the avoidance of suffering, or the meeting of desire. The Christian life is about being transformed into the image of Christ" (p. 227). This statement serves as the thesis for the chapter, as she explains that the gospel is the lens through which everyone should view the relational world. This is well stated, and Smit has done an excellent job in this part of the book of bringing a gospel perspective to relationships as well as providing a reminder that the gospel is to infiltrate every area of one's life.

Smit includes an appendix in which she has written "A Word to the Church." It may be helpful for the reader of *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* to read the appendix before the rest of the book, as she offers a very clear explanation of her own view on singleness.

In conclusion, Smit is to be applauded for venturing into the discussion of relationships. While there are a multitude of websites, magazines, and books devoted to the single adult in secular society, the realm of Christian scholarship would do well to put more research and time into this topic. *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* is not really a book on

single adulthood as much as it is a book that tries to answer the questions “Why are we here?” and “How can we best prepare for the coming kingdom?” Though most will probably take issue with Smit’s almost defensive position on singleness, she nonetheless provides a healthy challenge to readers in thinking through how to best prepare and expect the coming kingdom of Christ. While *Loves Me, Loves Me Not* certainly does not answer all the questions that unrequited love brings, it would be a beneficial read to scholars and laypeople alike who desire to think more deeply through the issue of singleness and the kingdom of God.

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The New Faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the Global South. By Philip Jenkins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, x + 252 pp., paper \$26.00.

As Distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at Pennsylvania State University, Philip Jenkins is renowned especially for his *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford University Press, 2002). His other recent books (all published by Oxford University Press) include *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (2004); *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost Its Way* (2001); and *Mystics and Messiahs: Cults and New Religions in American History* (2001).

The New Faces of Christianity is a sequel to Jenkins’s *The Next Christendom* through the lens of biblical interpretation. The current work grows out of a 2004 lecture series at Harvard University’s Memorial Church. Jenkins compares the literalist readings of Scripture in the global South (Africa, Asia and Latin America) to the progressive readings of mainline denominations in North Atlantic Christendom. He relies heavily on the global population statistics of David Barrett’s *World Christian Encyclopedia* (2 vols., Oxford University Press, 2001) and the yearly updates published by the Overseas Missionary Study Center (*International Bulletin of Missionary Research*)—broadly considered the most accurate data available today. Evangelicals may question whether Europe has 530 million Christians or Latin America another 510 million, but the author is faithful to the numbers of national censuses. Exemplary of his content and engaging style, Jenkins writes, “The figures are startling. Between 1900 and 2000, the number of Christians in Africa grew from 10 million to over 360 million, from 10 percent of the population to 46 percent. If that is not, quantitatively, the largest religious change in history in such a short period, I am at a loss to think of a rival” (p. 9).

Jenkins’s thesis is that the emerging Christian faith of the global South is centered in the Bible as it brings together fresh and “fundamentalist” interpretations of Scripture with belief in direct revelation through visions and prophecy. He continually contrasts this biblical literalism with Euro-American Christendom’s significant focus on post-Enlightenment issues related to theological doubt, biblical skepticism, and pragmatic adaptations to societal norms (such as homosexuality). From a Northern vantage point, the great danger of the South, as Harvard’s Peter Gomes puts it, is the unholy trinity of “bibliolatry, culturalism, and literalism” (p. 11). In contrast, African and Asian Christians contend not with contexts of doubt but with competing, often hostile claims of faith by Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists—and, in some regions, the ideology of communism. Jenkins elaborates the tensions between the North and South in biblical interpretation through such chapters as “Old and New,” “Rich and Poor,” and “Women and Men.” While the author seeks to balance the virtues and ills of Northern and Southern approaches to the Bible, his sympathy is clearly with the emerging Christendom of the

South. Remarkably, in a work largely written for the North, Jenkins's concluding appeal is for a return to and renewed perspective of "the real Bible."

The New Faces of Christianity will delight many a reader interested in the demographic and theological shifts in global Christianity. Still, there are weaknesses with his approach. While Jenkins's vast research of indigenous forms of Christianity, especially in Africa, is impressive, at times it is disjointedly presented. Though he notes that the "global South" denotes Africa, Asia, and Latin America, Jenkins admits that his data regarding the later two continents is less extensive (this is particularly true of Latin America). Furthermore, conservative Christians will be uneasy with Jenkins's generous assumptions that virtually any group claiming to be Christian (regardless of its relationship to historical faith) is Christian. This is demonstrated not only by the repeated discussions of radical forms of African Zionism and other indigenous religions, but also by the very jacket of the book that displays a Brazilian festival of the Christian Spiritual Order—unanimously considered a spiritist cult in Brazil itself. Moreover, in his African research, Jenkins tends not to give adequate weight to the influence of major evangelical denominations such as ECWA, the Baptist unions, the Assembly of God, and others.

While *The New Faces of Christianity* focuses especially on the *new* expressions of Christian faith, it nevertheless is fascinating, indispensable reading (together with *The Next Christendom*) for all global-thinking Christians. The religious world is shifting far more rapidly than most North Americans are aware. In both works, Jenkins renders profound encouragement to the worldwide body of Christ, and with this book, the subtle admonition to preach and teach the Word, faithfully and context-creatively, could hardly be more eloquent.

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The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly In A Violent World. By Miroslav Volf. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, viii + 244 pp., \$14.96.

There is no doubt that Miroslav Volf's latest book, *The End of Memory*, is another piece of thoughtful and thought-provoking work. Having already topped the lists of 2007's best book awards in the Christianity and Culture category from sources as varied as *Christianity Today* and the increasingly lauded *Faith and Theology* blog, *The End of Memory* has clearly been recognized as a significant voice in the "ongoing conversation . . . about the importance of memory" (p. 10). Volf's distinct offering within this conversation, as the subtitle suggests, is his emphasis on "remembering rightly." He combines his life experiences and skills as a theologian to tease out what he is after in relation to the idea of memory. Specifically, his interests materialize around a single concept: the impact of Christ's death and resurrection on our remembering (p. 104) or, put as a question, "How does one seeking to love the wrongdoer remember the wrongdoing rightly?" (p. 17). In Volf's capable hands, the idea of remembering wrongs suffered, as the champions of remembering modern atrocities have rightly advocated, is taken up into the larger framework of Christian reconciliation and redemption.

Each section of the book builds upon the next and is interwoven throughout with Volf's own story of interrogation within the former communist Yugoslavia's military. His remembrance of abuse at the hands of his military superiors—what he considers a mid-level form of abuse—sets the tone for this book as he offers a transparent reflection of his own struggle to move from vengeance to stumbling "in the footsteps of

the enemy-loving God" (p. 9). The larger issue of remembrance is laid out alongside of his personal questioning: "What would it mean for me to remember Captain G. [Volf's interrogator] and his wrongdoing in the way I prayed to God to remember me and my own wrongdoing? How should the one who *loves* remember the wrongdoer and the wrongdoing?" p. (9). By arranging the material in this way, Volf is able to draw his readers into understanding rather abstract concepts by cradling his ideas within a personal narrative. At times I found myself picturing my own wrongdoers—insignificant as they may be—in Captain G.'s place and forcing myself to ask the same tough questions that Volf asks of himself; I felt uncomfortable facing my own realities. Fortunately, Volf has a knack for engaging his readers in such a way that allows for those with deep hurts—those who might not be ready to think about reconciliation—to read along as welcome skeptics.

In Part I—Chapters 1 and 2—Volf sets up the primary issues that underlie the book: Remember, yes; but what does that mean? As he astutely reflects, "The protective shield of memory often morphs into a vicious sword, and the just sword of memory often severs the very good it seeks to defend" (p. 18). Here Volf engages the conversation as it has been entertained within modern society, particularly with Elie Wiesel who, perhaps more than anyone else in recent history, could be called the champion of remembering. Wiesel, a survivor of the Holocaust and a Nobel Peace Prize recipient, has worked tirelessly as an advocate for "faith in the saving power of memory—faith that it will heal the individuals involved and help rid the world of violence" (p. 19). Volf admires Wiesel's work and agrees that there is indeed a certain correlation between memory and, drawing on Wiesel's thoughts, the "saving power of remembering suffered wrongs" (p. 19). For example, memory can serve as a means to salvation (not in the Christian sense of the word, but more akin to well-being) as it generates solidarity with victims. Moreover, memory can shatter the serene plane of our existence, arouse us from "the slumber of indifference," and goad "us to fight against the suffering and oppression around us" (p. 30). In correlation to solidarity, memory can also serve as a means to salvation by protecting victims from further hurt. As Wiesel declared in his Nobel lecture, the "memory of evil will serve as a shield against evil" (p. 32). Yet, from Volf's unique perspective, "the memory of wrongs suffered is from a moral standpoint *dangerously undetermined*" (p. 34); that is, the same memories that may heal and protect are just as capable of turning into swords of violence. Quoting Emil M. Cioran, Volf emphasizes that "the great persecutors are often 'recruited among the martyrs not quite beheaded'" (p. 33). He concludes, therefore, that the injunction to remember, repeated "like a reassuring drum beat" in our modern culture, does not actually provide the healing our world needs. Remember, yes; but what does that mean?

With the fundamental importance of remembering wrongs suffered firmly established, Volf spends the next four chapters—surely the heart of the book—integrating the conversation into the larger scope of the Christian doctrines of creation, reconciliation, and redemption. His work exudes excitement as Volf engages not only with classical Christian figures such as Augustine and Aquinas, but also with a host of interesting modern figures including Nietzsche, Paul Ricoeur, and Tzvetan Todorov. Whether or not one actually agrees with all of Volf's doctrinal positions, at the end of the day one thing is certain: his work admirably attests to the fact that dogmatics and ethics are meant to function together. Creation, redemption, and the final consummation are for him the story which "frames what it means to remember rightly, and the God of this story makes remembering rightly possible" (p. 44).

In chapters 3 through 6 Volf directs our attention towards subjects that revolve around the question "How should we remember?" Topics range from the moral obligation to remember truthfully and the call of love to lessons learned from Israel's interaction with Amalek and the issue of retributive justice. As Volf meticulously builds his case,

each section offers an indispensable portion to the argument as a whole and interlocks with the preceding and subsequent ideas. Two particular sections stand out above the rest: the new identities and possibilities given in Christ; and memory, the exodus, and the passion.

Volf persuasively argues that it is not only what *we* remember that impacts how we relate to ourselves and others, but *memories* can act upon us as well. And while much may need to transpire *outside* of a person who has been wronged to achieve healing (acknowledgement and apology, perhaps), there is also much that must happen *within* a person to resist the de-humanizing influences of some types of memory. “She will need to develop a sense that the wrongdoing has not closed off her horizon of future possibilities, that it does not exhaustively define her identity, and that her life continues to have meaning notwithstanding the wrongdoing” (p. 76). Memories, both active and passive, often chain us from within; “they hold us back so that we cannot project ourselves into the future and embark on new paths” (p. 69). Furthermore, memories can stifle and paralyze as much as they can protect. Drawing on David Kelsey’s work *Imagining Redemption*, Volf emphasizes that Jesus Christ heals painful memories by giving new identity and opening new possibilities.

It would be convenient for the theological aspects of Volf’s work introduced in this section to become a sort of theological *Deus ex machina* for the problem of remembering rightly. Volf could then easily disregard the problems and issues raised in the modern conversation—including psychological, sociological, and philosophical concerns—by simply trumping everything with the word God. Or how easy it would be for Volf’s theological perspective to become so introverted and detached at this point so as to shrink his framework from a doctrine of creation—which encounters all of reality with the problem of remembering rightly—established upon the work of God in Christ, to an aspect of something like an *ordo salutis*, thus advancing a retreat into a purely “Christian” conversation to the exclusion of voices from the outside. One of the strengths of this book, however, is Volf’s consistent interaction with psychology, sociology, and philosophy that refuses to be bifurcated from his theological base. Essentially, Volf’s theological underpinnings become the source for an *inclusive* rather than an *exclusive* conversation. Thus, psychology, sociology, and philosophy are worthy and necessary aspects of his argument; moreover, they gain proper meaning within the theological framework.

Specifically, Volf avers that the individual is shaped primarily by God rather than by the individual or others: “Instead of being defined by how human beings relate to us [including how we see ourselves], we are defined by how *God* relates to us. We know that fundamentally we are who we are, as unique individuals standing in relation to our neighbors and broader culture, because God loves us” (p. 79). Even the possibility of hope comes not simply from what *we* can imagine or long for but “from ‘outside’—from God” (p. 82). Indeed, “God’s promise engenders new possibilities,” not because it offers something recognizably better, but because it offers “the future reality of a radically different world” (pp. 82, 83). It offers God himself in Jesus Christ. This thoroughly *theological* anthropology does not simply trump the psychological, sociological, and philosophical aspects, neither does it provide the basis for an exclusionary conversation; rather, it offers the way of healing—for this is what it means to be one created and reconciled by God.

This is significant for Volf’s entire argument. For though he is in no way antagonistic toward the psychological, sociological, and philosophical aspects of this topic, Volf seeks to offer more than simply another “way” to remember. Indeed, his *terminus ad quem* is the reconciliation between wrongdoer and victim, which is purely a work of grace. The integration of wrongs suffered in human lives and the healing that results is most profoundly accomplished in and through the work of Jesus Christ. The framework

for remembering rightly, Volf insists, must continually be drawn away from a purely anthropological perspective and be refocused on God: "God is remembered to have been at work in faithfulness to God's people. And it is on God that memory zeroes in" (p. 101). Simply put, healing of wrongs suffered ultimately stems from an ontological foundation.

Volf thus sets forth a practical framework from the Christian tradition that serves to regulate "how we remember wrongs suffered in our everyday lives" (p. 94). The redemptive events of the exodus and passion serve as "regulative meta-memories" that, as sacred memories, not only refer to a specific past but also transcend those historical times and locations and consequently shape "our everyday memories of wrongs suffered" in an existential way (p. 102). For all intents and purposes, the implications of the exodus memory offer a fairly succinct summary of Volf's entire argument thus far: remember, remember truthfully, remember to help others, God, and a redeemed future (p. 108). Yet the exodus memory on its own "is not a fully adequate framework for remembering rightly" because in certain instances it appears to give retributive justice the last word (p. 110). Accordingly, Volf turns to the passion memory. In the passion memory, retributive justice is not forsaken but fulfilled ultimately in Christ's work on the cross. The prospect of reconciliation between victims and victimizers who, staggeringly, have been reconciled to God, now opens up before us. The passion memory, which teaches us to extend unconditional grace and affirm the claims of justice, maintains a "tension-filled verdict" that "is only possible because the Lamb of God took on himself the sin of the world" (p. 121).

Not surprisingly, Volf recognizes how difficult these ideas may be for victims of wrongs suffered, and his language seems to waver at times under that pressure. For instance, following his exhortation for unconditional grace, Volf writes that, "No offense imaginable in and of itself should cause us to withhold grace" (p. 121). Considering the substitutionary nature of grace—"initiated and willingly given to wrongdoers by the One who was wronged"—the phrase "in and of itself" strikes me as a sort of panacea, and perhaps rightly so. Maybe such occasions of seeming inconsistency are more appropriately thought of as spaces for resting that allow for the genuine burden of human hurt on the road to healing. After all, Volf notes, "Remembering rightly is work. It requires commitment and discipline. It is difficult even if those who have suffered wrong undertake it not simply for the sake of their wrongdoers, but also for their own sakes" (p. 126).

Finally, in chapters 7 through 10, Volf asks: "Remember, yes; but *for how long?*" This question is taken up within a very interesting "thought experiment"—not a straightforward argument for a position but an argumentative exploration of a *possibility*" (p. 142). Volf is interested in the idea, upheld by many throughout the Christian tradition, of what he calls the "non-remembrance" of wrongs suffered. His thesis is that in the world to come, memories of suffered wrongs will not come to the minds of those citizens, "for they will perfectly enjoy God and one another in God" (p. 177).

Volf draws upon the works of Dante, Freud, Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, and others who each in their own way insisted that the "forgetting" of wrongs suffered neither strips a person of her identity nor does a disservice to justice. Once again, Volf indicates the counter-intuitiveness of such claims, yet reassures his readers that "the not-coming-to-mind of evils suffered is one aspect of salvation understood as the driving out of sin and the pains of hell" (p. 188). It is not a matter of forgetting wrongs suffered, Volf notes, but of ultimate judgment and justice and, therefore, reconciliation. As he restates the premise: "God does not take away our past; God gives it back to us—fragments gathered, stories reconfigured, selves truly redeemed, people forever reconciled" (p. 201).

Here, the central issue of this book—the impact of Christ's death and resurrection on our memories—is cast forward into the world to come. What this means is that "each wrong suffered will be exposed in its full horror, its perpetrators condemned and the

repentant transformed, and its victims honored and healed. Then, after evil has been both condemned and overcome, we will be able to release the memories of wrongs suffered We will not 'forget' so as to be able to rejoice; we will rejoice and *therefore* let those memories slip out of our minds!" (p. 214). Though this line of thought is geared primarily toward the world to come, it can nevertheless exert an important impact in the world in which we now live—even if only "partially and provisionally," as we seek to exist "as human beings whose lives reverberate the life of God" (pp. 151, 120).

The End of Memory, while not terminologically complex, is not for the faint of heart. In one sense it offers a treatise in mature discipleship, which requires from the beginning that one be open to the possibility of loving one's enemy in the midst of the most dreadful circumstances. Professors and students of theology, psychology, sociology, and philosophy, as well as pastors, counselors, and parishioners, will no doubt find much benefit in this work.

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The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of the Christian Truth. By David Bentley Hart. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004, 448 pp., \$35.00.

I would prefer not to initiate a constructive-critical review of so magisterial a philosophico-theological work as *The Beauty of the Infinite* by D. B. Hart, but I must first allow myself to vent a bit. Kurt Vonnegut was largely correct when he said that semi-colons should be outlawed. Hart's sentences, especially in the first major selection, are not merely long, they are like large, lengthy rivers that meander throughout a continent, being much "dotted" throughout by semi-colons at the various twists and turns and sprinkled here and there with archaic terminology.

Yet despite significant stylistic difficulties (making the reader's role a most weighty one), *The Beauty of the Infinite* must be recognized as one of the most learned, erudite, deeply argued works of constructive philosophical theology produced for some years. It is, in one sense ironically, a postmodern theological deconstruction of Nietzschean postmodernity and a postmodern affirmation of the classical Christian faith in the beauty of the infinite triune God and his peace in Jesus Christ. Hart is an American, Eastern Orthodox theologian, and his Orthodox tradition colors much in the book, beginning with the title. Gregory of Nyssa's theology lies behind and at the forefront of much of what Hart develops (Augustine and H. von Balthasar taking prominent roles as well). As a work of theological aesthetics (the true beauty of the infinite triune God), this tone arises from the question, "Is the beauty to whose persuasive power the Christian rhetoric of evangelism inevitably appeals (the beauty of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ), and upon which it depends, theologically defensible?" This question unfolds and eventually opens out upon the entire Christian tradition. The truth of that gospel is inseparable from the beauty of the crucified Jesus of Nazareth who is the ultimate revelation of the truly infinite triune God.

Central to Hart's argument, and hence to his response to various contemporary philosophical developments (especially trajectories in postmodernism variously under the sway of Nietzsche), is that Christianity has always portrayed itself as a gospel of peace, a way of reconciliation both with God and other persons, and so as a new model of human community offering the peace that passes all understanding to a world caught in the thrall of sin and "violence." The earliest Christian confession, "Jesus is Lord," meant the radical peace of Christ, resulting from the rejection and violence he suffered

on the cross from the powers of this world. But he has been raised up by God as the true form of human existence, the eschatologically perfect love now invulnerable to all “violences” while yet present in history. Hence, as Hart emphasizes, it is only as the evangel is the offer of this true peace as the answer to all “difference,” and true beauty as the answer to all “distance” from the “other” (as real and available and practiced), that it has any meaning at all. Though the church has often belied this confession, it is this “presence” within time of an eschatological, divine peace, really incarnate in the person of Christ and imparted graciously to the body of Christ by the Spirit, that is the very heart of the church’s evangelical persuasion (“rhetoric”) to the world and of the salvation it thereby offers.

But can this be so if, as is now often claimed, all persuasion, all rhetoric is “violence” against the “other,” all claims of “peace” inevitably a covering, a falsification, masking an agenda of power and enslavement? A primary concern of Hart’s argumentation is to engage the major current of postmodernity that has been much molded by Nietzsche’s repugnance of Christianity and, thereby, his “genealogical,” flourish-filled, rhetorical dismantling of the “weakness” of Christian faith. With some effective help from John Milbank (*Theology and Social Theory*), Hart “genealogically” engages at length the thought of such nihilistic, deconstructive and neo-Nietzschean “others” as Lyotard, Foucault, Derrida, Levinas, and (especially) Deleuze, together with their anti-metaphysical, anti-totalizing efforts on behalf all violated “others,” and so makes clear that all such argument is itself ironically an ontology of violence. This is not at all to say that Hart disagrees with claims about the violence of human rhetoric and humanly produced metaphysical and political totalizations (e.g. National Socialism). On the contrary, he fully agrees, as one must. Rather, Hart asserts that while all metaphysical, cosmic portrayals of the whole (whether Platonic, Aristotelian, Hegelian, or otherwise) have done and do much violence in history, and while human offers of “peace” are inevitably duplicitous concealments of coercion, the offer of peace from the truly infinite God (versus a false infinite) who is infinitely beautiful, and so is the God who can and does effect true peace in Jesus Christ, is faithful and actually effects peace through the evangel. Thus, Hart’s questions regard the difference between two narratives: one that finds the grammar of violence written on every institution and embedded in every form of rhetoric, and a second narrative, the Christian message, which claims that a way of real peace, true reconciliation, has opened within history in Christ Jesus, a peace and beauty that ultimately overcomes all violence.

But Hart’s effective genealogical dismemberment of “Nietzschean” anti-Christian rhetoric is not enough. Simply showing Nietzsche to be in fact a clear, if very stylish, imaginative fabricator in his ragings against Christian faith still misses much of Nietzsche’s point. Can the content of the Christian faith and its claim of the true infinitude and beauty, and so peace, in and from the triune God revealed ultimately in the incarnate life, death, and resurrection of God’s incarnate Word/Son, be shown to be coherent, that is, not a covert scheme of manipulative power and violence? While the issue of rhetorical violence cannot be ignored, Hart’s lengthy essay argues that in the world of sin and violence there is a “difference” that is peace, a “distance” that is beauty, and that “affirmation” can only be truly theological. The peace of God made manifest in Christ is unique; it alone can liberate the world from the tyranny of power and violence. In affirming this, Hart reflects a significant portion of “the postmodern” in the course of his postmodern theological critique of the Nietzschean stream of postmodernity, that is, against modern concerns for truth as such, for “cold rationality” in relation to the Christian evangel. Hart is clear that beauty rather than simply (only?) truth, or rather beauty as inseparable from truth, is the measure of that which theology may speak of as truly Christian. The beauty of God as historical is none other than the crucified and risen Jesus of Nazareth. Hart thus condemns modernity’s search for comprehensive

metanarratives and epistemological foundations by way of some neutral rationality—in which Christianity has “no stake.”

Given this conclusion, and his postmodern theological deconstruction of contemporary deconstructive violence against the Christian faith, Hart then gives most of his attention to a major constructive philosophico-theological argument, what he calls “A Dogmatica Minora” (though there is nothing “minora” about it). This theological panorama is itself an aesthetic confession of the beauty of the truly infinite God. It is Hart’s portrayal of the Christian narrative in the broad sense as critical Christian reflection on the four major “movements” or “vantages” of the authoritative Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (“in its unadulterated Greek form”). These four “moments” are Trinity, Creation, Salvation, Eschaton. Faithful to his earlier criticism of “cold” dialectical rationality, Hart carefully develops a larger (and particular) Christian narrative of the triune God’s reconciling love in Christ in powerfully sweeping, sometimes almost poetic, form. This extensive essay in dogmatic theology does not reduce the faith to a series of separate propositions. Rather, a series of major theses plays a prominent developmental role throughout Hart’s argument, giving order and relative conciseness to a variety of issues. Hart avoids any typically systematic, deductive sequence in his dogmatic argument, but forms his theses into a series of interrelated but somewhat independent “interpretive vantages” upon the essential matter of the Christian narrative. Again, this “Dogmatica Minora” is both rhetorical answer to postmodern violence against the claim of peace in the Christian evangel (and so the Christian narrative as a whole) and an expansive rhetorical re-complexification of the thought of the Christian fathers (especially Gregory of Nyssa) via these four “moments” of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan symbol of the faith.

Throughout Hart’s developing “Dogmatics,” the beautiful truth of the infinite glory of God found in the perichoretic relations of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is rightly made central, the divine basis for the gospel of peace effected in history in the incarnate, crucified, and risen Word/Son of God. Many will find Hart’s dogmatic rhetoric, his almost total avoidance of discursive, dialectical, critical, theological argument, frustrating. But Hart has been forthright throughout about the fact that (for him) the Christian faith has no stake in the cold, neutral, dialectical rationality of modernity, which was a fiction anyway. As a result, Hart’s theological argument, though extraordinarily deep and rich, as it constantly develops important theological-redemptive insights from within the tradition, often reads (feels?) like poetry, or better, as complex multileveled hymnody. This is deeply theo-logical confession. With this statement Hart would be pleased and would surely agree. Indeed, he refers to the glory and beauty of God’s triune infinitude and its revelation in Christ Jesus, and so the evangel of peace for the world, as music.

I must add here an important note with unfortunate brevity. Hart constructively develops numerous important theological issues that have recently been and continue to be much discussed and argued. Among these noteworthy contributions are Hart’s unexpectedly convincing argument for the rehabilitation of (emphasizing the crucial nature of) analogy for theological understanding and reflection. Another is his imposing argument for divine *apatheia*. He argues that it has been much misunderstood in most recent theological argument, but in fact it is necessary and ought to be properly recognized not as aloof unresponsiveness but rather as trinitarian love, divine beauty, and perfect joy in the “other,” by which God is God. Herein Hart gives much food for fresh theological consideration.

Despite much weariness acquired as a result of D. B. Hart’s ponderous, often archaic, style of writing, *The Beauty of the Infinite* is the richest of theological feasts (and “feasting” is appropriate here, along with wine, as the biblical symbol of divine bounty). Hart has undertaken a massive task, both in relation to contemporary philosophical culture and to the whole Christian narrative, the Christian confession, and the evangel of Jesus

Christ at its center. Hart's "postmodern" deconstruction of the postmodern rejection of the Christian faith, as just another form of the will to power through false weakness and a claim to peace as necessarily false (in favor of Dionysian life), is both quite complete and extraordinarily effective. Such hatred of the Christian evangel is itself an ontology of violence. Hart's amplification of the Christian narrative of God's offer of peace, reconciliation in Christ as answer and as rhetorical "showing" of the cogency of that Christian claim, is likewise mighty, often almost staggering in depth and scope. Amazing.

Yet, in a work of this magnitude one cannot help but have concerns. Despite regular reference to the biblical basis of Christian theological authority, the book gives to Scripture only very occasional explicit roles, for example, the narrative of the divine Trinity from the Gospel account of Jesus' baptism. In fact, much of the argument simply baptizes certain philosophical streams, which are set over against opposing positions, and these are said to affirm the logic of the scriptural revelation (e.g. Anselm's *sid quo maius cogitari nequit*). Though this reviewer undoubtedly still reflects here certain effects of modernity, it often appears that Hart's rhetorical articulation of the Christian narrative is as empty rhetorical as, say, Nietzsche's; indeed, some portions even sound almost Spinozean (though Hart would emphatically deny this). It also seemed at times that theological positions were criticized only because they did not fit the patristic or medieval Christian vision of God as the infinite source of all being, as though such philosophico-theological expression were to be equated with the biblical portrayal of God. I worried at times about a serious case of historical romanticism. Finally, Hart has little time for, nor anything positive to say about, Luther, Calvin, or Protestantism, since these reflect, he says, a "low ebb" in Christian theology (pp. 133-34). Still, this is a truly amazing, demanding, but highly rewarding theological treatise. Most highly recommended.

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The Way That Leads There: Augustinian Reflections on the Christian Life. By Gilbert Meilaender. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006, xi + 172 pp., \$16.00 paper.

In his recent work, Gilbert Meilaender interacts with key aspects of Augustine's moral theology, appropriating his thought toward a variety of contemporary ethical issues in a masterful economy of words. A specialist in ethics, Meilaender capably tries his hand at Augustine, with his stated purpose being "to probe . . . some aspects of the moral life" (p. ix). While making no claim to being an Augustinian specialist, he carefully interacts with those who are (Robert Markus, Donald Burt, John Burnaby, Edmund Hill, Peter Brown, and Lewis Ayres, among others) while also responsibly incorporating some choice works from Augustine (*Confessions*, *City of God*, *Against Lying*, *The Trinity*, and some of Augustine's letters). Furthermore, the author is not attempting to do the work of an historian—some of which would strengthen his argument, as this review will show. Rather, he regards Augustine as a "conversation partner" with whom he can "worry aloud" over certain moral issues.

Meilaender begins with a discussion of the tension between desire (chap. 1) and duty (chap. 2) before carrying those thoughts into more practical conversations on politics (chap. 3), sex (chap. 4), and grief (chap. 5). Interestingly, he waits to discuss his methodology until the close of the book (chap. 6). In large measure, Meilaender's goals are not unlike those of Donald X. Burt in *Friendship & Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy* (Eerdmans, 1999); he does in fact interact with Burt in chapter four. While Burt is an accomplished Augustinian scholar in the area of

philosophy, Meilaender's effort is nevertheless distinct because he works from his strengths as an ethicist. Hence, the two works, while overlapping on a number of issues, are complementary. Having given this general overview of *The Way That Leads There*, I will now briefly interact with the main themes of each chapter and offer some critique.

In a rather C. S. Lewis-like fashion, Meilaender's opening chapter presents a lively discussion on desire. Through interaction with Augustine, Luther, Lewis as well as his contemporaries in ethics, Meilaender wrestles with the tension of desire for happiness and disinterested love. Appropriating Augustine's famous prayer, "because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you" (*Conf.* 1.1; cf. *Conf.* 10.22), Meilaender asserts that all humans are created in need and truly desire God. Indeed, Augustine unapologetically longed for the "happy life" (*vita beata*) and claimed it in God's presence. Hence, it was a fair, reasonable, and inherently selfish goal.

Meilaender correctly adds that the sixth chapter of *Confessions* shows Augustine pursuing the happy life in the presence of God as well as in the company of others. Thus, Augustine's "selfish" pursuit of God charitably benefited others while also exposing the deficiencies of humans to love. This, in turn, led him back to the presence of God for genuine satisfaction. Meilaender's argument is only supported by what we know about Augustine's journey in community. Prior to his conversion in 386, he and several friends attempted a "happy life" community in Milan pursuing philosophical understanding (*Conf.* 6.14.24). While that plan failed, Augustine succeeded in initiating a philosophical and spiritual community at Cassiciacum (near Milan) in the months leading up to his baptism in 387 (*Conf.* 9.4.7). This conviction for community ultimately resulted in the proto-monastery in Tagaste (388–391; *Possidius*, 3), the garden monastery in Hippo (391–395; *Possidius*, 5.1), and the clerical monastery in the bishop's house in Hippo (395–430; *Possidius*, 11.1). In this communal context of pursuing God in the company of others, Augustine broke with Cicero's classical idea of friendship (*amicitia*) toward a uniquely Christian understanding that he eventually termed *caritas*.

In the second chapter, Meilaender rather seamlessly moves from desire to a discussion of duty—that which we ought to do even if it is inconvenient. He deliberately focuses on the duty of truth-telling by surveying Augustine's work *On Lying*, interpreting Augustine's definition of lying as a "mismatch" between what is in one's heart and what one speaks" (p. 69). Arguing the hierarchical position, Meilaender seems to charge Augustine with an overly simplistic position on lying that does not fully consider the cases of the midwives (Ex. 1:17–20), Rahab, and the hypothetical case of withholding bad news from a dying man. Rather, he sides with Bonhoeffer (*Ethics*, 372) that lying might at times be necessary.

Resuming the desire-duty debate, Meilaender asserts that *Confessions* is a tale of desire while *On Lying* promotes duty. He further avers that martyrdom represents the pinnacle of duty: "The existence of the church's martyrs teaches Augustine that we are sometimes obligated to relinquish certain goods, even that of life, rather than violate our duty. It suggests the possibility of an obligation that does not seem to lead to any fulfillment" (p. 74). I would argue, however, that a further investigation into the narratives and subsequent theology of martyrdom in the North African church in the first five centuries suggests otherwise: that desire for the presence of God was certainly in the minds of those embracing martyrdom. As William Frend asserts (*Martyrdom and Persecution*, 314), the phrase "today we are martyrs in heaven" (*hodi martyres in caelis sumus*) became a rallying cry among North African believers between AD 180 and 305. As martyrdom was embraced by believers like Scillium (180), Perpetua and Felicitas (203), and Cyprian (258), the selfish motivation of entering the presence of God was quite apparent. This is even more reflected in the Montanist writings of Tertullian (*On Fleeing Persecution; Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*) in which martyrdom was rigorously embraced almost to the point of being a sort of temporal spiritual pleasure

that resulted in an eternal one. Augustine, while condemning the Donatist excesses toward voluntary martyrdom in his day (he called it suicide), nevertheless preached about a hundred sermons on the anniversaries of the martyrs. In these he appealed to his congregation to imitate the example of those who had suffered for their faith. Hence, it seems that Augustine would regard martyrdom as an opportunity that led to happiness in the presence of God more than a duty that leads to no fulfillment.

That quibble aside, Meilaender nicely concludes the chapter on duty by summarizing the tension “between the God who calls us to himself (desire) and the God who calls us to obey.” He adds that “only the God who gives what he commands, in whom we are to hope, can overcome it” (p. 76).

Working from the philosophical discussion of desire and duty, Meilaender converses with Augustine in the third chapter on the nature and extent of politics. He argues rather clearly that politics cannot meet the desires of restless hearts and thus people are often guilty of asking more of politics than it can provide. Hence, Meilaender seems especially committed to upholding eternal matters—that which is spiritual and heavenly—over the temporal. Drawing upon the work of Markus and Burt, he capably interacts with Augustine’s two cities, avowing that it is a messy paradigm to apply to contemporary politics. In this discussion, Meilaender helpfully distinguishes Eusebius’s triumphal regard for Constantine from Augustine’s view that the Christian emperor’s emergence was not necessarily the answer to biblical prophecy or a show of God’s providence in an eternal Roman Empire. Also, he makes the interesting point that Augustine’s amillennial stance was not only informed by his thoughts on the “city of God” but also by the limited hope he placed in politics.

Meilaender does seem to err in his assertion that Augustine contradicted his view on the limits of politics in his approval of the Donatist suppression in North Africa. Again, a bit of historical work might cause him to reconsider that claim. Meilaender fails to take into consideration that by Augustine’s day, the Donatist controversy was nearly a century old. In the latter half of the fourth century, the violent Circumcellion element had arisen and advanced their factional aims through violence and terror. From 392 to 405, Augustine’s posture toward the Donatists was quite evangelical as he wrote letters, produced books and tracts, and initiated debates toward winning his errant brothers back to the unity of the church. In councils with the North African bishops as late as 404, Augustine repeatedly urged his fellow bishops to approach the Donatists in a charitable and persuasive manner. Yet, when Honorius issued the edict of unity in 405 and Marcellinus ruled against the Donatists at Carthage in 411, Augustine did comply. Even so, it cannot be responsibly argued that his goal was religious suppression; rather, Augustine accepted state intervention as a last resort to quell violence in a turbulent society. Similarly, he accepted the state’s suppression of pagan violence in nearby Calama in 408, after his friend and fellow bishop Possidius was beaten in his church by a pagan mob (*Possidius*, 12). Hence, Augustine’s view that the state could rightfully restrain evil was not contradictory to his political philosophy.

In chapter four, Meilaender expands the discussion of desire and duty by interacting with Augustine on sex. He summarizes Augustine’s belief that the purpose of sex was procreation and to some extent pleasure, adding that it would be wrong to separate the two purposes and merely have sex for the purpose of pleasure. Working from Lewis’s analogy, Meilaender likens sex to food. While eating ought to bring pleasure to the senses, it is also nourishing and maintains the health of the one eating.

Meilaender expands upon Lewis’s thought and offers an added benefit to eating: a meal brings friends together for community and fellowship. This reasoning would have surely struck a chord with Augustine who, as noted, initiated monastic communities at Tagaste and Hippo. According to Possidius, one of the key points of the monastic day in Hippo was table fellowship. Referring to Augustine, Possidius noted: “He practiced

hospitality at all times. Even at table he found more delight in reading and conversation than in eating and drinking” (*Possidius*, 22.6). While the meal was not extravagant and consisted usually of vegetables and wine, the better nourishment included theological discussion and fraternal communion. In fact, gossip was strictly forbidden at Augustine’s table! Thus, at this stage of the conversation with Augustine, Meilaender would probably have a good hearing from Augustine on this added benefited of sex: bringing a couple together into deeper intimacy and friendship.

In short, Meilaender convincingly shows the insufficiency of Augustine’s view of sex as being primarily for procreation. One might surmise that Augustine’s personal experience of sexual promiscuity in his younger years led him to this more functional perspective. Furthermore, his prescriptions on sex and marriage were given while he was personally practicing chastity in a monastery. Interestingly, before concluding this chapter, Meilaender carries the conversation into a consideration of some contemporary problems of contraception and assisted reproductive strategies. Though revealing his strengths as a bio-medical ethicist, Meilaender nonetheless abandons his conversation partner back in the fifth century!

Meilaender next takes up the subject of grief in chapter five by putting on display the longing soul left unsatisfied by selfish sex and an unrealistic expectation of politics. Surprisingly, he seems to converse more with Lewis and the *Problem of Pain* in this chapter than with Augustine. Simply put, Meilaender argues that to be alive is to be passionate, and longing and to be alive in the fallen world means facing inevitable grief. He adds that the humiliated Christ, the “man of sorrows,” suffered appropriate grief. Meilaender also show that Augustine rejected the Stoic alternative of *apatheia*, a “liberation from passion,” as a dishonest and diluted look at the world. Finally, he returns to the original question of desire, suggesting that grief is a solace that reveals both the need and desire to be satisfied in God.

As this review has shown, Meilaender has overall rendered a great service in *The Way That Leads There*. So who should read it? First, ethicists contemplating moral issues will find a relevant conversation partner in Augustine. Secondly, students of history and Augustine may celebrate and wrestle with some relevant moral ideas from the bishop of Hippo. Finally, Christians in general will discover its devotional content nourishing. Though “devotional” in the twenty-first century might be construed as “light,” Meilaender’s work is anything but that. Rather, it is a feast of thought to be read (like Lewis or Augustine) in a slow and contemplative manner.

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