

BOOK REVIEWS

Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar. By Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi. Invitation to Theological Studies Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, xviii + 364 pp., \$49.99. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar—Workbook.* By Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi. Invitation to Theological Studies Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, xi + 335 pp., \$29.99. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew: A Beginning Grammar—Classroom DVDs.* By Russell T. Fuller and Kyoungwon Choi. Invitation to Theological Studies Series. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, 6 discs, \$49.99.

Invitation to Biblical Hebrew adopts a deductive approach to teaching biblical Hebrew (BH) by focusing on phonology and then morphology. The grammar, workbook, and DVDs represent what Fuller and Choi think students should master in two semesters, equipping them to translate simple prose. Admitting BH cannot be learned in a year, they plan to offer an intermediate book on syntax, comprising a second year of Hebrew. Through this “layered” approach to teaching BH that Fuller employs at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, the authors hope students will know BH well enough to use it in Christian ministry.

The authors’ approach focuses on rules that are explained and demonstrated in the various chapters. Students imitate the forms through exercises and repeat the material until it is thoroughly engrained in their memory. Sometimes this involves memorization of paradigms, but more often the authors try to ease the burden of learning BH by expecting memorization of rules of syllabification, vowel reduction, assimilation of weak letters, and vowel patterns of verbs.

The plan of the book is as follows. Chapters 1–6 deal strictly with phonology, leading to the “heart of the grammar,” namely four rules of vocalization in Proto-Hebrew that lead to five rules of syllables in BH. Exercises at this level ask students to apply these rules to convert BH words into Proto-Hebrew and vice versa. The rest of the book builds on this foundation and is devoted to morphology, first of nouns and adjectives (chaps. 10–16); then the strong verb in all stems (chaps. 17–28); then various classes of weak verbs (chaps. 29–38). Chapters typically end with review questions, a vocabulary list, morphological drills, and translation sentences. Only the last two chapters assign a passage for translation (Gen 20:1–8 and 9–18). The book ends with thirty-four pages of charts; a comprehensive vocabulary list; subject index; some review; and sixteen pages of color-coded verb charts.

The grammar is carefully planned and executed. It is large, and the pages have enough white space for students to write notes. The workbook closely follows the content of each chapter, providing answer keys and additional drills. The aim of the grammar is translation of BH prose, but the workbook does not comment on the way its English translations were produced. The DVDs present Dr. Fuller at his desk, kindly teaching the material to an individual viewer. One additional camera angle allows the user to view his handwritten illustrations of morphology. Each lesson typically closes with his encouragement for the student to go learn the vocabulary and work the drills. He offers no tutelage on these matters nor any help in reading.

Invitation to Biblical Hebrew is part of Kregel’s Invitation to Theological Studies series of primary textbooks for seminary study. According to the publisher, “ITS provides

foundational works that are both intellectually stimulating and spiritually refreshing.” Unfortunately, this book is neither. Its unwavering devotion to the deductive approach has left little room for helpful pedagogical imagination. The message and language of the OT is rich, but this grammar lacks a single paragraph offering a noteworthy exegetical comment, light from a word study, or insight from a facet of history or culture, let alone any spiritual encouragement to the user. Beyond this summary observation, this review will consider three topics.

First, the deductive approach to teaching BH has a long history but it is hardly “tried and true” (back cover). The field of second language acquisition offers theoretical foundations and methodological tools which can fruitfully be incorporated into the teaching of ancient Hebrew and Greek. *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew*, however, shows no awareness of or appreciation for these advances and adopts its rigid deductive approach without justification or elucidation of its supposed strengths. One may question the effectiveness of this approach for teaching one how to translate, but the more fundamental concern is how it subtly mischaracterizes BH primarily as a complex system of morphologically encoded information to be “broken down” rather than a once-living language functioning as communication between real persons. In other words, one may conceivably master the morphological details of the Hebrew verbal system, yet fail to internalize and understand the language itself. Languages can be analyzed for their phonological, morphological, and syntactical features, but no research on pedagogy proves the claim that people actually acquire reading fluency in these three discrete stages.

Second, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew* claims to be a beginning grammar that shares basic information for the student, not the scholar. This leads one to expect it to be easy to understand. The most obvious feature of the book is its thorough treatment of morphological details, complete with their theoretical relation to Proto-Hebrew. One can only wonder why this is so important for translation or use in ministry. The book employs technical terms such as “plosive,” “inner causative,” and “retrospective adverbs” quite freely and often without explanation. The supposedly helpful colloquial language is sometimes more problematic than beneficial. For example, Hebrew particles are called “idolatrous.” Furthermore, because a-class theme vowels (which the book codes with red color) dominate the Pual and Hophal stems, these stems are “all red” and therefore “Communists.” The combination of *hireq* and *yod* in words such as לְיִלְדֵי (“for children”) is somehow called the “Hebrew love story.” The authors offer the strange and difficult word “SQeNeMLeVY” as a mnemonic to help students remember which letters may omit the *dagesh forte* with the vocal shewa (as with הָיָה for הִיָּה). The book thus shares a great detail of morphological detail, but inexplicably treats the meanings of the derived stems in scant fashion. Explanation of the meaning of the Niphal simply mentions its passive and reflexive values with no reference to the middle. Likewise, the Piel, Pual, and Hithpael are “intensive” yet also factitive and denominative. There is nothing about the more common value of the Piel as resultative (especially for Qal transitives). The book uses nomenclature that does not adequately describe the function of a form, such as the label “vav consecutive.” The conjunction *vav* with an a-class vowel and the prefix conjugation is extremely common in BH but does not always indicate consecutive action. In the phrase וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר (Zech 4:6, woodenly “he answered and said”), the second action certainly does not follow first. Even at the level of vocabulary, the grammar is simplistic. Hebrew words commonly appear in vocabulary lists with flat English equivalents. The book glosses שָׁפֵט as “a judge” rather than as a pre-monarchic ruler. The value of the form הָיָה is given as “and he (it) was,” though it regularly appears as a discourse marker and not something to be translated according to its constituent parts. When showing students how to distinguish between the definite article and the interrogative *he*, a footnote reads, “In examples like הָיָה, only

context determines whether the word has the article or the interrogative ך (p. 42). There is a point here, but in fact, the word הִכֵּל never appears with the interrogative *he* in BH.

Third, the book claims to serve the interests of future ministers who “take the ministry seriously” and preach the Word of God (p. xviii). Yet strangely, the grammar offers its instruction of BH without explanation of its particular usefulness. In chapter 2, students are to learn fifteen vocabulary words, yet none of them appears in the exercises for that chapter. Finally, the book gives the impression that BH is hard to learn. Translation exercises appear without explicit references to the Bible itself. In the entire book (including footnotes) there are less than a dozen references to biblical chapter and verse. Translation exercises tend to come from the Bible, but always in isolation of context and never with any indication of location. Students are expected to translate these sentences, but the book does not discuss the roles of context, semantic range, genre, vocabulary, or culture of the target audience or how to handle gender issues in the source or target languages. The student is always assumed to be male, and is never referred to as “she.”

Finally, the book gives the impression BH is hard to learn. Any morphological deviation from the strong verb or some other simplistic “rule” tends to be treated as a “problem” to be solved or something especially “difficult” or “challenging.” So-called “weak” verbs have “infirmities” and “sicknesses” and their morphological distinctives are classified as “remedies.” One quickly senses that BH is very foreign indeed.

Surely the world of biblical Hebrew pedagogy is diverse, and more grammars are already in the pipelines. For teachers who wish a purely deductive approach, *Invitation to Biblical Hebrew* may satisfy. But increasing numbers of teachers are finding ways to help learners truly internalize the language through active dialogue, living production of the language in classroom settings, stories, and activities. Already the result is not only faster learning, increased motivation and more lasting retention, but better comprehension of BH *as language*. I agree with Fuller and Choi’s admission that “an ultimate Hebrew grammar will never be written” (p. xvii), but hope future offerings will make ever-increasing use of current research and testing in how people best learn second languages.

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A Workbook for Intermediate Hebrew: Grammar, Exegesis, and Commentary on Jonah and Ruth. By Robert B. Chisholm, Jr. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2006, 306 pp., \$21.99 paper.

What level of instruction is “Intermediate Biblical Hebrew,” and how does one go about writing a textbook or workbook for it? I suppose the intermediate level varies based upon the goals and accomplishments of the introductory course or courses at an educational institution. At my particular institution, which focuses Hebrew on undergraduate education and pre-seminary training, introductory biblical Hebrew consists of two 15-week courses with about 5,600 total contact minutes. Except for the most neglectful of students, basic skills such as recognizing and parsing verbs have become manageable tasks by the end of the first year. The goal is a typical liberal arts goal—thorough preparation with an eye toward inculcating a love of ancient Hebrew for its own sake.

However, at many seminaries the opposite extreme is the norm. Hebrew is sometimes introduced quickly, perhaps in as little as five or six weeks during a summer

course. Even when Hebrew is taught during the regular academic year, most seminaries do not come close to the 5,600 contact minutes typical at my institution. The goal for seminary Hebrew instruction is clearly not Hebrew for its own sake but Hebrew as a tool for exegesis. Chisholm's *Workbook for Intermediate Hebrew* is aimed at the seminary student who has learned the elements of Hebrew on such a compressed and/or accelerated schedule. In such settings, Chisholm's workbook would be a welcome tool, for it very ably seeks to compensate for deficits the average student will bring to an intermediate Hebrew course.

A brief introduction introduces the reader to the goals of the workbook and its organization. The bulk of the work consists of programmed instruction while reading through Jonah (Part 1) and Ruth (Part 2). A third part contains charts designed to help students parse verbs—perhaps the most important skill needing reinforcement in such an intermediate course. Appendices include a short introduction to independent clauses in biblical Hebrew and “teacher’s guides” for both Jonah and Ruth.

Parts 1 and 2 of the workbook are where students will concentrate their attention. Each part begins with a page providing a short introduction to the book (Jonah or Ruth) as a whole and its literary concerns. Then, short portions of each book (between four and eleven verses) are presented as assignments. At the end of each section is a list of vocabulary for the entire book, with references to the appropriate pages in BDB and *HALOT*. This makes the workbook fairly useable for daily assignments.

Each assignment is divided into four steps. Step 1 is called “Initial View.” The student is asked to read the Hebrew text (with the help of an interlinear if necessary), underline unfamiliar forms, and identify verb forms by aspect.

Step 2, “Analyzing the Text,” presents the pointed Hebrew text, verse-by-verse. The student is asked to respond to questions regarding sentence structure, clause function and verb parsing and syntax. (Space is provided for the student’s written answer.) Often, further information and explanation is given to help students in both the task of translation and to aid in exegesis. Sections of several popular introductory grammars are often referenced in footnotes. Comments also note the interpretive assumptions of several English Bible translations. Included are short explanations of syntactic or semantic features students at this level may not note on their own. Students are regularly referred to pages in some reference works. Chisholm also makes frequent reference to his own *From Exegesis to Exposition: A Practical Guide to Using Biblical Hebrew*. Verb parsing questions usually refer the student to the appropriate verb parsing chart in part 3 of the workbook.

Step 3, “Interpretive Translation,” provides space for the student to present an “interpretive, periphrastic” translation of the verses analyzed in the questions of Step 2. This is followed by Step 4 that asks the students to provide an outline of the narrative structure of the section just translated. Students are expected to delineate the narrative structure and classify all clauses using the appendix on Hebrew clauses or the appropriate pages from Chisholm's *From Exegesis to Exposition*.

Chisholm's workbook is a good resource for instructors who need to provide a bridge for students from a basic seminary Hebrew course to using Hebrew for exegesis. However, several points of caution are in order:

- (1) Chisholm's verb parsing charts are rather bare bones. Their organizational scheme is not always apparent. Instructors should look them over carefully and determine whether they are comfortable with the charts before adopting this book.
- (2) Students will need access to Chisholm's *From Exegesis to Exposition* to derive the most benefit from this workbook. An instructor needs to provide access to this work (e.g. through copies on library reserve) or require students to purchase it for the class.

- (3) I find the frequent references to Waltke and O'Connor, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax (IBHS)* for syntactical explanations less than helpful. In my experience, most students are not ready to use *IBHS* as a reference work. This is due to its rather heavy reliance on linguistic theory and jargon (which is beyond the expertise of most students) as well as its sometimes idiosyncratic presentation of Hebrew syntax. In addition, the size of *IBHS* and the additional expense of owning it make it a somewhat intimidating and unavailable resource, especially for seminary students who will not specialize in exegesis or OT studies.
- (4) The teacher's guides at the back of the workbook contain answers to most of the questions in the Step 2 portions of the assignments. Some instructors will not object to this, others will.

Despite these cautions, this workbook should find useful applications under the right circumstances. In choosing two shorter books of the OT, Chisholm has provided a sense of accomplishment for students who complete this workbook. The inclusion of Jonah has the added benefit of introducing a short section of poetry—priming students for the many important poetic sections of the OT. While this workbook will not fit into every intermediate Hebrew course, instructors who find themselves needing to provide their students with review of basic Hebrew grammar and move them toward skill in using it for exegesis should give serious consideration to adopting this workbook for their classes.

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Reading the Good Book Well: A Guide to Biblical Interpretation. By Jerry Camery-Hoggatt. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007, xii + 240 pp., \$27.00.

Reading the Good Book Well is a hermeneutics text directed toward the beginning student. Chapters 1 (“Reading the Bible and Aching for God”) and 2 (“It Isn’t Just about God; It’s also about Garry”) display an understanding of the concerns of a postmodern student who views the Bible as the authoritative word of God. Rather than beginning with theory, Camery-Hoggatt engages the heart of the reader who is primarily concerned with the relevance and application of Scripture. While he affirms the appropriateness of these desires, he nonetheless asserts that the results suffer unless contemporary application is preceded by questions about what a text meant to its original author and readers. Unlike many hermeneutic textbooks, he does not disparage the “What does this mean to me?” approach, but rather argues that it is asked too quickly. Using examples that are both delightfully interesting and insightful, Camery-Hoggatt demonstrates the necessity of the hard work of careful exegesis. He argues the age-old concept that a text cannot mean what it never meant.

The book has two parts (“The Why of Exegesis” with five chapters and “The How of Exegesis” with twelve chapters). Part I introduces a paradigm for recovering an author’s intended meaning. Chapter 3 provides the overall argument that the best interpretations result when a reader discovers the prior information known to the original audience, assumes the predispositions of the original audience, engages the proper reading strategy or protocol for a given textual genre, and respects the presuppositions shared by the original author and readers. His lucid discussion of Thomas Kuhn’s paradigms and perspective will assist typical postmodern students to understand the ambiguity and diversity they often experience. Rather than abandoning

authorial intent (and the authorial reader), however, Camery-Hoggatt demonstrates its importance for reading the Bible well (with a powerfully compelling personal example). Chapters 4 and 5 introduce the beginning student to how we attempt to establish the text penned by the original author (NT textual criticism) and then how we arrive at an English Bible (translation theory).

In Part II, Camery-Hoggatt instructs the reader in the various tools of exegesis, or in how to move from what a text says to what a text means. He sets forth four challenges for a valid interpretation of a biblical text. First, the gaps of the biblical text (between what is said and what is assumed by the author [chap. 7] and lexicography [chap. 8]) should be filled with the schemas, scripts, and personal information that best approximate those of the original readers. Chapters 9 and 10 address cultural gaps and the benefits of social science research. Chapters on genre and form (chap. 11) and biblical introduction (chap. 12) round out this first challenge.

The second challenge is to eliminate irrelevant background information. Chapter 13 explores how to determine which portions of the lexical, cultural, form, and historical information are not important contributors to the meaning of a given text. The third challenge is recognizing polyvalence and overcoding (chap. 14), illustrated with an engaging introduction to word plays, irony, and other ways by which an author can intend multiple effects on the reader. Chapter 15 focuses on the specific kind of polyvalence called intertextuality, whereby a biblical author interacts with texts in his oral or literary tradition by means of allusions, echoes, and direct quotations.

Finally, Camery-Hoggatt asserts the fourth challenge is to take the sequence of a text seriously, considering only the information available to the reader. Chapter 16 addresses elements of literary criticism, providing instruction in the ways that foreshadowing, foretelling, flashbacks, chiasm, inclusions, and more, allow authors to further emphasize and reinforce their intended meanings. In conclusion, the entire process of “reading the good book well” is modeled in chapter 17 through an exegetical interaction with Luke 10:25–37.

The strengths of *Reading the Good Book Well* are plentiful. Its conversational tone and contemporary illustrations commend it to today’s college student. The colloquial and engaging language belie how it introduces in an understandable way the best insights from social science, linguistic theory, intertextuality, and textual criticism. Camery-Hoggatt’s delineation of the four challenges for valid exegesis is solid and clearly presented. It is an uncrowded, clean, well laid-out text.

All books have weaknesses; one is more significant. While another popular hermeneutics textbook, *Grasping God’s Word* by Duvall and Hays, may be critiqued for having too much practice and not enough content, Camery-Hoggatt is weak in the other direction. He often stops short of empowering the student to actually do exegesis. Finally, the textbook leans heavily on NT texts and examples. In spite of these criticisms, we believe instructors should give this book serious consideration as a textbook.

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The Edited Bible: The Curious History of the “Editor” in Biblical Criticism. By John Van Seters. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006, 428 pp., \$39.50.

The Edited Bible makes a significant contribution to the introductory questions of authorship, text production, preservation, and distribution. In this work, John Van Seters sets out to “challenge all those who seriously engage in biblical criticism, higher and lower, to justify their use of an edited Bible and their assumption of ancient editors

or redactors as agents in the formation of the biblical text to the authorized editions and versions of modern times" (p. xv). Van Seters states his thesis, saying that "notions about *editors* or *redactors* as those responsible for the final compositional form or the standardization of the text of the Hebrew Bible, or its parts, books, and divisions, at the very least, are problematic and in my view entirely erroneous" (p. 22).

Van Seters develops his thesis by means of a step-by-step consideration of all the relevant aspects of the discussion. Specifically, he pursues an understanding of the editor's role in classical (Hellenistic and Roman periods) and biblical scholarship. Van Seters does this by examining the role of the editor in biblical scholarship from Richard Simon to contemporary redaction criticism and the parallel development of the editor's role in Homeric Studies. He unfolds his argument by means of ten chapters that cover the composition, reproduction of authoritative manuscripts, the question of authorship, and the development of editors in connection with the creation of standard editions for wider distribution (pp. 2, 113). Van Seters is passionate about his task and spares no detail in developing a case that he says does not rest on his own particular theory of literary history of the Pentateuch but on evidence presented against the notion of an edited Bible (pp. xv, 2).

The key elements of Van Seters's argument are five-fold. First, Van Seters attempts to demonstrate that there is no ancient equivalent for the prevailing view of an editor in biblical scholarship. He concludes that editors are an invention of the Renaissance, wherein they perform certain kinds of work associated with the production of books (p. 13). He documents that the first usages of an editor in biblical scholarship appeared in the seventeenth century. Van Seters challenges the common understanding of an editor or redactor as a combiner of independent sources who adds to and changes his sources at will. Rather, he attempts to define the editor or redactor as one completely faithful to his source or author, preserving and transmitting the ancient text and adding nothing of his own (p. 391). He concludes, "There is no equivalent in antiquity to the indispensable modern editor or redactor. The use of the term redactor in the discussion of the creation or production of new literary works in antiquity is an anachronism" (p. 21).

Second, Van Seters relies on the classics, especially the literary works associated with Homer, to clarify how the role of the editor developed and influenced biblical scholarship. Van Seters concludes that since classical scholarship has given up on the idea of Homer being edited by Alexandrian scholars, biblical scholarship should apply a similar conclusion to biblical texts.

Third, Van Seters defines the fundamental error of redaction history or redaction criticism from the seventeenth century to the present as the misunderstanding of ancient historiography and the displacement of the author/historian by the notion of an editor or redactor (p. 112). According to Van Seters, the Pentateuch and Deuteronomistic History are best understood on the model of ancient historiography in preference to the model of the editor. As such, Hebrew historiography deserves to be compared with the Greco-Roman world. Those, according to Van Seters, who made the most productive contributions to the editor discussion were the source and form critics DeWette, von Rad, and Noth. Van Seters contends that the editor's role was not properly articulated by the students of these men.

Fourth, Van Seters details the editor's role in textual history especially in connection with the debate about recensions. The argumentation of this point is designed to show how editors are confused with creators of recensions and persons who introduced interpolations into the text. In this discussion, Van Seters highlights the difficulty of drawing a line between the literary process of redaction and textual revision.

Finally, Van Seters documents the role of the editor in canonical criticism as a canonizer of the final form or the transmitter of the authorized tradition or text. The supporting evidence of this topic is the fact that editors were given "great religious

liberty to shape the text as they wished until the final form of the text is declared canonical" (p. 400).

The specific contribution and strength of *The Edited Bible* to the study of introductory issues is the organization and presentation of extensive details related to the questions of authorship and text production. Van Seters's presentation interacts with leading theories and their related architects in order to expose his thesis regarding the role of the editor. The book is a helpful reference and offers perspective that is better suited for advanced studies. Ironically, the strength of *The Edited Bible* is also its weakness. The reader is easily lost in all the detail and left wondering what exactly is Van Seters's alternative.

Since publication of *The Edited Bible*, Van Seters has been involved in an exchange with several of his reviewers. In the *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, volume 7, Article 9 (<http://www.jhsonline.org>), "Author or Redactor?," Van Seters addresses the critiques of Jean-Louis Ska, Eckart Otto, and Christoph Levin in order to advance the debate and to remove misunderstandings that hinder it. Van Seters graciously responds to each critic and invites further scrutiny on the concept of the biblical editor. In addition, he reasserts his understanding of editor as historian with reference to the Dtr in the writings of Noth and the Yahwist in the works of von Rad.

The publication of *The Edited Bible* illustrates the ongoing and unresolved questions associated with the nature of the Bible, its origin, and composition. Van Seters gives little or no credence to Mosaic authorship and the compositional theories associated with conservative biblical scholarship. Despite this, *The Edited Bible* presents an argument for an author and a historian that affords the opportunity to highlight a view of composition in keeping with the Bible's revelatory nature. Perhaps it is time to revisit attempts such as the one by R. Laird Harris, who described the prophet as author in his work *Inspiration and Canonicity*.

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Flame of Yahweh: Sexuality in the Old Testament. By Richard M. Davidson. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007, 844 pp., \$29.95 paper.

In this age of flaming language about sex, sexuality, gender studies, and its implications, Richard M. Davidson, Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at Andrews University, has written an ardent, authoritative survey of sexuality discovered in the OT Scriptures. Without losing the passion of presenting the foundational attributes of sexuality given as a "divine design" by our Creator in Genesis 1–3, Davidson tackles the difficult issues, a litany even Dante would have included in the *Inferno*, such as cultic sexuality; pagan practices; feminine imagery; homosexuality; marital foundations; polygamy; feminine leadership and submission; the priesthood; abuse of spouses; prostitution; premarital sex; adultery; divorce; intimacy; incest; illegitimate childbirth; reproduction; birth control; abortion; rape; and more! Most Christians would shun many of these issues, but Richardson unveils their association with the biblical passages in which they arise and therefore "supports the view that biblical materials do not reflect a negative view of sexuality itself" (p. 8). Richardson explains well the view of seeing the whole body in relationship to sexual organs, a Hebrew mindset. He boldly asserts the teleological plan for sexuality from the Creator, traces the degeneration of sexuality after the Fall, and fortunately ends up on a positive note, verifying the beauty of sexuality

as a holy union, using the metaphor “the Flame of Yahweh” from the Song of Songs (8:6), as the wholesome, holy beauty of sexuality.

The structure of the book consists of three parts. The first part analyzes the divine design of the Creator in creating Adam and Eve, or the “Edenic design.” The second section examines the development of sexuality outside the garden. The third major division constitutes a “return to Eden,” concentrating on the Song of Songs, the beauty and holiness and virtue of sexual love. An afterword incorporates how the study of OT sexuality has implications for the NT. Throughout the book, each area has separate issues or topics in sexuality as well as references to the canonical development of the Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings. Richardson’s last chapter reaches beyond the scope of the OT by suggesting some implications for a NT theology of sexuality; certainly a sequel to his study will follow and will be anticipated by readers interested in these issues. Finally, the bibliography offers an extensive selection of sources in the study as well as an index of ancient biblical references and sources.

The Flame of Yahweh fulfills a great need in the history of OT scholarship. Richardson attributes the lack of scholarship in sexuality in the last century and the renewed interest in the twenty-first century to the areas of the modern feminist movement, the new literary criticism, and the sexual research of social scientists. The existential liberation movements have been exaggerated and transformed into existentialism exaggerated—the postmodern turn. Feminists seek Foucault’s political power plays, extending their influence in human sexuality as well as in religious positions in the church. Some feminists have replaced Freud’s phallogocentric notion of sexual drives (*die Triebe*) with maternal psychologies of sexuality. The new literary criticism movements, such as structuralism, deconstruction, and postmodernism, led by Jacques Derrida, Stanley Fish, Lyotard, and others, have removed meaning from hermeneutics, from the text, and notably from the Holy Scriptures, replacing classical literature with egotistic, sexual emphasis of the psychological self in literature, with the arousal of sexual liberation power of Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* or Nabokov’s *Lolita*. The social scientists, led by Jürgen Habermas’s redefinition of the social sciences as “progressive, liberating community action,” claim issues such as homosexuality can be solved by a genetic, social acceptance of deviations from cultural taboos, and biased scientific studies with individual agendas can reinforce social change in our community since relativity pervades scientific study and the individual and society enter into a dynamic, evolving force, modifying our attitudes toward sexuality.

With this background, Richardson attempts a counterargument based upon biblical grounds—his project is a “wholistic theology of sexuality in the Old Testament” (p. 1). Instead of focusing on the prevalent specializations in the literature, such as the role of women and the feminine dimension of divinity, Richardson desires a comprehensive theology with depth and breadth beyond three major works he mentions: Phyllis Trible, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978); Samuel Terrien, *Till the Heart Sings: A Biblical Theology of Manhood and Womanhood* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1985); and David M. Carr, *The Erotic Word: Sexuality, Spirituality, and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003). Unfortunately, he does not include, except in the bibliography, some excellent recent evangelical resources presenting biblical insight into sexuality issues from a biblical view: Daniel Akin, *God on Sex: The Creator’s Ideas about Love, Intimacy, and Marriage* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2003); and Wayne Grudem and John Piper, eds., *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1991).

First, Richardson defines his use of the term for “sexuality.” In this study, the term “human sexuality” (or “sexuality”) is used to encompass both the concepts of human gender differentiation (male and female as a duality and their interrelationships) and

sexual endowment with its various biological, psychological, and social dimensions” (p. 2). Next, he explains his task of “examining every passage in the Holy Bible dealing with human sexuality in an attempt to lay bare the basic contours of a theology of human sexuality in the final (canonical) form of the Old Testament, building on previous research and engaging in original exegesis where necessary” (p. 2). Richardson does a magnificent job of surveying the OT passages relevant to the sexuality issues; however, I would prefer that he do exegesis on each passage rather than assuming “where necessary” in order to give ethos or credence to his scholarship. Many times he uses interpretative devices of language analysis in order to bias his viewpoint on the issue, criticizing some traditional values of Orthodox Christianity. In addition, more explanation needs to be developed in what he calls an “analysis of the canonical form of the Old Testament.” What definition of “canonical form” is he using in this context? He certainly does not mean the classical definition of the “canon,” since he “utilizes insights from such widely accepted synchronic methodologies as the new literary criticism and the new biblical theology which focus on the final form of the Old Testament text” (pp. 2–3).

On the other hand, Richardson uses his own interpretations of Hebrew words in order to present his views on postmodern problems raised by feminism and the new literary criticism itself. It turns out that Richardson is trying to be all things to all people by incorporating both the conservative-evangelical and liberal-higher criticism approaches to biblical criticism—an admirable approach for reaching out to the postmodern feminist critique of the Holy Bible, but one that avoids a fundamental stand for classical biblical scholarship. He asserts:

By focusing on the final form of the Old Testament text, I believe it is possible that the interests of both the liberal-critical and evangelical OT scholarship may merge in seeking to understand what constitutes the canonical theological message of the OT regarding human sexuality. Although I have profited enormously from feminist scholarship, this study does not employ the feminist hermeneutic of suspicion and resistance, but rather the hermeneutic of consent. In other words, I read not *against* but *with* the grain of the text in its final form (p. 3).

Applying Paul Ricoeur’s “hermeneutic of suspicion,” I suspect that even Richardson is biased in his presuppositions, using Hans Georg-Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons” to fuse the evangelical mind with the liberal critical scholars. This attempt, although noteworthy, has failed even in professional arenas like the Evangelical Theological Society. This Rogerian “win-win” approach cannot displace either Toulmin’s logical analysis or Aristotle’s deductive rhetoric, nor can it alleviate the scrutiny of D. A. Carson’s “exegetical fallacies.”

Richardson insists his theology is “allowed to emerge from exegetical analysis of relevant passages”; thus it is an “exegetical theology” (p. 6). The key word here is “relevant.” Richardson’s premise is that “Genesis 1–3 has been situated as an introduction to the canon, and the whole rest of the canon regularly harks back to and builds upon this Edenic pattern” (p. 3). His teleological approach is admirable as a foundational theme, but each biblical passage should undergo exegesis in order to prove his argument in context of the specific issue in sexuality. Using the Edenic passage as biased perspective on the rest of the OT might be suspect unless this process is accomplished. Not all scholars agree with John Rankin, whom Richardson quotes: “Whether one is evangelical or liberal, it is clear that Genesis 1–3 is the interpretative foundation for all Scripture” (p. 4). At least Richardson’s voice can be heard in the academic marketplace of ideas: “I do not claim to have the final or exclusive word on sexual theology in the Old Testament. Hence, this work constitutes *a* (not *the*) theology of sexuality in the Old Testament” (p. 5).

As a scholarly study, Richardson's *Flame of Yahweh* ignites a desire for a better understanding of the dynamics of sexuality as a gift from God, but it is still only a study, not *the* study on sexuality, and the best source is still the Word of God.

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Preaching: The Art of Narrative Exposition. By Calvin Miller. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 284 pp., \$21.99.

Calvin Miller, preaching professor at Samford University's Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Alabama, has made an excellent contribution to the field of homiletics with this volume. He proves to be quite the wordsmith, especially when he evaluates the state of preaching today. The rise of postmodernism and its influence in the pulpits of churches worldwide are addressed, and his disdain for what he terms "megaghettoes" (p. 17) is colorfully displayed, often with biting commentary.

The volume is divided into three parts. The first deals with exegesis. Miller calls us back to the fundamental truth of Holy Scripture and dissuades us from the "Bible lite" (p. 17) exegesis sometimes found in contemporary pulpits. This gives rise to "how to" sermons and departs from the more biblical "Thus saith the Lord" of great preachers from years past. The second part concerns itself with the actual writing of the narrative sermon. Beginning with the actual name or title of the sermon, Miller carefully maps out a route that takes us from the initial idea for the message to the actual writing. The third section is on sermon delivery. Style is unique to the individual and begins with being genuine. "Two faces may work for clever politicians, but preachers must wear a single face—promote and live out a single lifestyle" (p. 177). Style also includes passion without the desire to imitate other pulpit heroes. The section concludes with helpful advice on pulpit presence, such as what to do and what to avoid doing.

Strengths of this book are many and weaknesses are few. It is first and foremost relevant. Every pastor has struggled at one time or another with the task of having to say something rather than having something to say. It is just a fact of life to a pastor, especially if the pastorate is long. Miller's book is relevant in that it speaks to the heart of preachers and encourages them to strive for the more difficult aspects of pulpit ministry, and not just settle for what is easy and convenient.

Yet another strength of the book is the analysis of the state of preaching today. Without naming names, or churches, Miller addresses some of the major shortcomings in the modern pulpit. He does this in such a compelling manner that he does not need to call out people by name. Large churches with biblically weak messages that focus on us and often fail to mention Christ are not helpful to the kingdom. Preachers more concerned with promotion of themselves and their websites rather than the proclamation of the good news of Jesus contribute other abuses. We have all seen these things happen, and perhaps with a degree of conviction confess to falling prey ourselves to these very things. Often in a sincere desire to be relevant, we have fallen short of the glory of solid biblical exposition.

Perhaps the greatest strength of this book is its readability. One will genuinely enjoy reading the book. Calvin Miller knows how to turn a phrase, and he keeps it interesting with quick wit, self-deprecating humor, excellent examples, and compelling stories. "Dull" is not a word that could be used to describe this book.

A weakness of the volume is the lack of a clear explanation of what exactly he means by narrative exposition. While he provides encouragement for the preacher to utilize

narrative exposition and provides good examples, I was still left wondering about the concept. One wishes Miller would have provided a chapter or section discussing what exactly he means by narrative exposition, as well as what narrative exposition is not.

Calvin Miller has definitely made a significant contribution to the field of expository preaching. It is a volume homiletics should read and take to heart. Whether the work will endure and become a staple in preacher's libraries such as Haddon Robinson's many volumes remains to be seen. For an enjoyable experience, this volume will provide many laughs, along with several daggers that can pierce the soul.

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Biblical Law And Its Relevance. By Joe M. Sprinkle. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006, xvi + 235 pp., \$39.00 paper.

This work by Joe Sprinkle is a compilation of works Sprinkle has published or taught in a number of venues since the publication of his dissertation *The Book of the Covenant: A Literary Approach* (JSOTSup 174; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994). The chapters include "The Mosaic Law and the Christian," "Is There Truth in the Law (John 1:17)?", "On the Gospel of John's View of the Mosaic Revelation", "Near Eastern and Biblical Laws Compared", "Law and Narrative in Exodus 19–24", "Exodus 21:22–25 (*Lex Talionis*) and Abortion", "'Do Not Steal': Biblical Laws about Theft", "Understanding Laws of Clean and Unclean", "The Red Heifer", "Old Testament Perspectives on Divorce", "The Law's Theology of Sex", "'Just War' in Deuteronomy 20 and 2 Kings 3", "Law and Justice in the Historical Books", and "Conclusion: Is the Law Relevant for Today?" An extremely helpful summary of the contents of each chapter is provided in the preface of the current book, so my purpose here will be to interact with some of the important issues addressed in the chapters.

Sprinkle begins the work with an overview of the ways evangelicals have approached the subject of the relevance of the law to the church age. He surveys and critiques major Christian approaches to the law among Reformed, Classic Dispensationalist, Lutheran, and Christian Reconstructionist interpreters. After summarizing these diverse approaches, Sprinkle lays out his own approach—the principlizing approach. This approach has the advantage of recognizing that Paul's mandate that all Scripture is profitable (2 Tim 3:16) must also include the Mosaic law while recognizing that some of the OT laws were addressed specifically to the nation of Israel. These pertain especially to the OT civil laws whose sanctions are not repeated in the NT when violations of laws prohibited in the OT were committed (cf. Lev 18:8, 29 with 1 Cor 5: 1–15). Sprinkle addresses the objection to the law's relevance as illustrated by the phrase "we are not under law" (Rom 6:14) by stating that the phrase may refer to Pharisaic merit theology or that the term law, by metonymy, refers to the condemnation of the law.

While Christ has fulfilled the law and thereby transformed the way OT laws apply to the church, the law's moral and religious principles still apply to the contemporary Christian life. These moral and religious principles should be equated with "the law of Christ." Moreover, the religious principles contained in the OT ceremonial laws are of extreme value to the modern Christian as they present the framework for understanding the work of Christ and the atonement.

Sprinkle has a very helpful chapter on the relevance of cleanness and uncleanness issues in his chapter on "Understanding Laws of Clean and Unclean" (chap. 7). Chris-

tians are to derive from these teachings on cleanness and uncleanness the key message that God is holy and that humans are unfit to approach such a holy God. Everyone in the OT economy would have become unclean from time to time and thus would have to take appropriate actions before having contact with the holy, e.g. the tabernacle or temple. Hygiene, at best, is a secondary explanation for these laws.

In illustrating the uncleanness that would take place in the context of menstruation Sprinkle directs the reader to the narrative of David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11. The relevant portion of the narrative begins with the announcement that Bathsheba was bathing on the rooftop indicating the end of her menstrual uncleanness/impurity. After David commits adultery with her Bathsheba "purified herself from her uncleanness" (2 Sam 11:4), an act Sprinkle claims is a reference to a ritual bathing after intercourse. In taking this position, Sprinkle overlooks the grammar of this passage. The author has described each event in the narrative by use of the common narrative verb, the *wayyiqtol* form, but after the adulterous act is recorded the author switches to a *waw* disjunctive phrase that is *not* to be taken as a sequential event. Thus the purification has already taken place (many English translations take the verb in 2 Sam 11:4 as a past perfect, i.e. non-sequential), and the most natural referent would be the cleansing of menstruation at the beginning of the narrative. (There is no ritual cleansing for adultery!) This interpretation, in fact, drives home Sprinkle's point more forcefully that the pregnancy that occurred had to be the result of sexual relations with David and not by her husband Uriah (2 Sam 11:5).

Sprinkle has an excellent discussion on the metaphorical use of cleanness and uncleanness in later historical and prophetic books showing how the terminology of the uncleanness laws was used symbolically to refer to deviations in morality. This symbolism carries over into the NT as well (it would have been intriguing to learn of Sprinkle's view of this concept in Rev 21:27).

Another important chapter is Sprinkle's discussion of what the OT says about divorce (Chapter 9). Sprinkle begins with the important passage of Deut 24:1-4 and correctly observes that the main point of this passage is to prohibit a woman from returning to her first husband if she has subsequently been married to another man (even if that man dies). The prophet Jeremiah (3:1) clearly has this passage in mind in comparing God's relationship to the nation of Israel that has been guilty of unfaithfulness to the Lord. The point of the comparison is that the people cannot return to the Lord if their relationship to the Lord has been severed as they have consequently "married" another through idolatry. In expounding upon this metaphor, Sprinkle addresses the contemporary issue of whether church leadership is ruled out for those who are divorced by asking if God (pictured in Jeremiah as divorced) would be disqualified for a leadership position. While some might consider this an insightful question, it is an unnecessary deduction as it forces the metaphor to "walk on all fours."

While finding myself in disagreement with some of Sprinkle's positions, I applaud his effort to take seriously Paul's admonition to find all of Scripture to be profitable for life and practice. Most works of this kind mainly address the issue of whether or not the OT should in any way be considered normative for the Christian life. Sprinkle addresses this but goes well beyond this discussion to the practical ways the OT is relevant for the contemporary Christian. Sprinkle expresses in the conclusion his hope that this volume will challenge its readers "to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the relevance of this often neglected portion of the Bible and of the Lawgiver who inspired this material" (p. 204). The relevant issues he has insightfully raised should enhance the likelihood of achieving this goal.

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The Torah Story: An Apprenticeship on the Pentateuch. By Gary Edward Schnittjer. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006, 592 pp., \$44.99.

The Torah Story by Gary Edward Schnittjer is an impressive and lengthy entry into the growing list of books that treat the Pentateuch as a literary and theological unity. The book consists of 29 chapters, including two introductory chapters and one concluding chapter. The first introductory chapter, "An Apprenticeship on the Torah," describes the purpose and format of the book. The purpose is to offer "an invitation and guide—an apprenticeship or part of one—to the Five Books of Moses to challenge and assist the apprentice reader" (p. 10). The book is not designed to be comprehensive in treating every verse, every law, or every problem in the Torah.

The format of most chapters consists of two primary sections. "A Reading" focuses on the meaning of the biblical text itself, and "Another Look" considers questions related to history, chronology, culture, theology, and connections to the broader biblical canon. Each chapter contains a wealth of helpful study aids, including "Focus Questions"; lists of terms to guide the reader; an outline of the biblical text under consideration; a concluding chapter summary; a repetition of the key terms for review; "Challenge Questions"; "Advanced Questions"; ideas for further research; and a select bibliography. At the end of some chapters is a creative section entitled "American Stories and the Torah Story," in which the author invites the reader to consider how popular culture (e.g. *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or comments by Bono of the rock group *U2*) resonates with the Torah story. Questions on the content occur frequently throughout each chapter as an encouragement to regular assessment of reading comprehension.

The author explains his presuppositions in the first chapter. He reads the Torah as Christian Scripture, the authoritative word of God, not merely as an example of ancient Near Eastern literature or a part of the Hebrew Bible. He places interpretive priority on the biblical narrative and biblical intertextuality, treating other background contexts (e.g. historical, cultural) as valuable, but not to be used at the expense of the biblical story. This biblical story is "God's story," and is "the story into which everything, including the world of the narrator, fits" (p. 16). This story is not reducible to propositional statements, and the one reading the story should seek not to "do something to it but learn how to hear it" (p. 28).

The chapter "Introducing the Torah" provides an excellent, brief overview of Genesis through Deuteronomy. The next chapter, "Reintroducing the Torah," reviews the Torah story and highlights connections with the broader canon. Chapters 3–28 form the core of *The Torah Story*. The author devotes eight chapters to Genesis, five to Exodus, four to Leviticus, four to Numbers, and five to Deuteronomy. Within each chapter are sidebars and tables that provide extensive information about the text and its context. For example, on pages 178–80, Schnittjer provides an explanation of biblical poetry. In other sidebars he discusses a variety of issues, such as chronology (e.g. of the Genesis narratives and the date of the exodus) and geography (e.g. the location of Mt. Sinai). At the end of the book one finds a list of tables, figures, maps and sidebars, a Scripture index, and a subject index.

Many features of this book make it easy to recommend. Most noteworthy are the breadth and depth of Schnittjer's many excellent observations and comments on the biblical text. It is an unfortunate irony that reading a book about the biblical text often replaces reading of the biblical text, in spite of the author's stated intention to help readers grapple with the biblical text itself. This is a special danger with textbooks such as this one, inasmuch as they are typically lengthy, and when used in classroom settings put students in the position of making difficult choices regarding how best to invest their study time. More often than not it seems that the biblical text loses out. In *The Torah Story*, however, Schnittjer deftly guides the reader to consider the depth and beauty of

meaning in the Torah. He does not merely give lip service to the priority of the biblical text. Instead, on page after page he discusses the structure, patterns, and surprises of the narrative in a way that draws the reader into the biblical story. This is an impressive feat, and one that makes this rather long book still very suitable for use in the classroom. It would serve particularly well in a course on the Pentateuch at either the undergraduate or graduate level, and could also be used as a text on the hermeneutics of OT narrative literature or a survey of the OT.

One significant result of Schnittjer's careful reading of the text is that he offers many reasonable explanations to traditional questions and problems in the Torah without resorting unnecessarily to extrabiblical materials. Sometimes these explanations highlight answers in the text found through a close reading, such as his emphasis on reading Deuteronomy not as a sermon, covenant, or law code, but as God's instructions to his people within a broader "storied context" (e.g. Chapter 24). At other times, these explanations show refreshing caution and reserve based on the lack of specific textual evidence. For example, he follows the biblical text in not attributing the plagues in Egypt to specific Egyptian gods (p. 223), and he agrees that the distinctions between clean and unclean in Leviticus are arbitrary (simply "because God said so," p. 327).

There are, inevitably, a few editing errors in this extensive survey (e.g. the pictures of plants created by God on the *fifth* day of Genesis 1; p. 64). More distracting are some of the pictures in the text, which are obviously intended to maintain reader interest but are poorly selected. For example, after arguing in the text that there's no certainty on where Mt. Sinai is located, the book proceeds to display a number of pictures labeled "Mt. Sinai." But these are small issues in what is otherwise an excellent treatment of the Torah as Christian Scripture.

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Leviticus. By Nobuyoshi Kiuchi. Apollos Old Testament Commentary 3. Ed. by David W. Baker and Gordon J. Wenham. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007, 538 pp., \$35.00.

Nobuyoshi Kiuchi is Professor of Old Testament at Tokyo Christian University in Japan. His commentary includes the numerous components expected in a standard commentary, but the substance of the work lies in the Text and Commentary component in which each section of text is addressed as follows: Translation; Notes on the Text; Form and Structure; Comment; Explanation; and New Testament Implications.

Although I find myself disagreeing with Kiuchi's basic approach, he is to be commended for the substantial investment he has made in the study of Levitical law, a notoriously demanding area of study. Kiuchi began in the 1980s with a dissertation in the area, followed this with publication of a book on the purification offering, then more recently he has contributed a monograph on Leviticus 4–5, a work that is central to his commentary. In addition, his close reading and detailed textual work is certainly stimulating and thought-provoking, providing some rethinking of some long-standing interpretations of key terms and texts. And all of this work reflects up-to-date knowledge of and interaction with leading scholars and current scholarship on Leviticus.

Kiuchi begins by describing his approach to interpretation as symbolic. At a basic level, the description reflects the conviction that the ritual actions have significance beyond their literal observance. In other words, one is not to assume that the accomplishment of a ritual act in and of itself achieved its stated purpose (e.g. atonement or forgiveness); only if the attitude of the person bringing the offering was appropriate was

the action effective. All well and good; the problem arises in Kiuchi's particular development of this basic idea.

Kiuchi rejects the common understanding of the Hebrews' status at Sinai as a redeemed people because their character and conduct prior to arrival at Sinai show that they "left Egypt without experiencing a clinical operation on their hearts" (p. 27). The people then stood at Sinai "yet unredeemed (unsaved) from their sinfulness, a position roughly equivalent to having an egocentric nature" (p. 28). Thus he believes the law was given to bring them to holiness, which he equates with ridding themselves of this egocentric nature. No doubt some of Kiuchi's language sounds unusual or even strange for the context. In fact, his understanding of certain important terms is central to his entire commentary.

I briefly recount Kiuchi's conclusions on two terms, *nepesh* and *hata/hatta't*. *Nepesh* refers to "the invisible side of a human being, [and] it should be translated 'a soul,' with the understanding that, despite having a pure core, it ordinarily manifests itself with egocentricity that constantly reacts, consciously or unconsciously, against God (cf. Hab 2:4). Therefore I use 'egocentric nature' to explain the term, but in translation, 'a soul'" (p. 36). The term *hata'at* indicates something beyond simply violation of a prohibition; it points to the condition of a person's heart. It is a term with an existential sense reflecting the idea of hiding oneself from God. A major characteristic is to indicate that "the agent is not conscious of his own heart's condition" (p. 37).

Kiuchi follows Wenham's formulation for the most part in adopting the "death-motif" as the most comprehensive model for explaining the concepts of clean and unclean but then suggests that the death in view is not physical but spiritual death. To illustrate, he focuses on regulations regarding *tsara'at*, translated "leprous disease," as reflective of the tendency of humans to hide their sinfulness and as symbolic of "the human egocentric self" (p. 39). The key connection of the concepts of clean and unclean to that of holiness lies at this point. As Kiuchi puts it, "Negatively, holiness refers to an inner human state where there is an absence of egocentric nature" (p. 41).

The following is a preliminary and summary critique.

- (1) In the studies of key terms, argumentation is sometimes esoteric, reasoning sometimes hard to follow, and the conclusions less than compelling. As a result, understandings and translations of the terms appear idiosyncratic and anachronistic. My impression is that Kiuchi attempts to explain OT concepts in NT terms, thereby attempting unsuccessfully to clarify certain ambiguities of detail on spiritual realities inherent in the ancient material.
- (2) Kiuchi never really defines what holiness is in any positive sense. If to be holy means to be without an egocentric nature, what is that state? What does it look like? How is it to be described? Can it actually be achieved or experienced? In fact, Kiuchi's discussion of the concept at times seems to make the language of holiness meaningless. For example, in discussing the consecration of priests (Leviticus 8–9), he notes that they are assumed to be holy both in an inward and an outward sense, but then states that "it is unlikely that inner holiness was achieved by this ceremony" (p. 42). This lack of clarity carries over to Kiuchi's discussion of the NT experience in light of OT law, leaving unclear how he understands the effect of Christ's death for the practical life of faith (pp. 47–48).
- (3) The approach suggests the odd position that, on the one hand, the sacrificial legislation was given as a way of destroying the Hebrews' egocentric nature, putting them into a state of holiness but on the other hand asserting that one could not offer acceptable sacrifice without being truly holy, but then in addition positing the possibility that a person might somehow embody this

state and thus make sacrifice unnecessary. In other words, when a person arrives at a place where he or she might offer sacrifice as worship in the purest sense (being holy), the offering would not be necessary and if offered would have no meaning (pp. 32, 42, 46).

I am convinced that a simpler, and in some ways more traditional, perspective is preferable to Kiuchi's approach. That perspective begins with the foundational truth that the whole story was a story of grace. God's action of grace means that he chose to enter into relationship with sinful people. Yes, they were challenged to be holy (different and distinctive in spiritual, moral, and ethical terms), but the fact that the Lord gave the commandments, particularly the ritual commandments, reflected the fact that they would never be perfect or perfectly holy, but despite that fact, through grace, they would be able to live in relationship and communion with the holy God. No one normally assumed any ritual action automatically changed them; people would have naturally lived with the understanding that they were not perfect, not fully "clean," not fully "holy," in the sense that God was, but they had the assurance that the "system" of ritual offered them an avenue of approach to the holy God despite the fact that they were human, mortal, and inherently unclean and unholy. The laws, particularly the ritual laws, were God's chosen way of allowing the people to express their relationship to God and to maintain fellowship with God.

In line with the above assertion, I also wonder if Kiuchi's approach does not suffer from too much emphasis on people and their nature and too little on God and God's nature. After all, the focus of the larger narrative is God and God's action to reach out to people who have betrayed God's intentions. The story reflects not so much a concern with getting people to be better so they can escape God's wrath, but rather reflects a concern with the holy God coming in mercy to live among needy people so they can be made better.

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The First Book of Samuel. By David Toshio Tsumura. NICOT. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xxii + 698 pp., \$50.00.

The familiar, yet at times enigmatic, narratives of 1–2 Samuel have long been the focus of attention for congregational engagement as well as seminary exegetical analysis. Furthermore, the ongoing work of the SBL Deuteronomistic History Section, together with major publications such as Fokkelmann's four volume *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*; Polzin's two works *Samuel and the Deuteronomist* and *David and the Deuteronomist*; and McCarter's two volumes in the Anchor Bible series all bear witness to the reality that while the narratives are familiar, there is much to be learned about their history, composition, and meaning. David Toshio Tsumura, who serves as professor of Old Testament at Japan Bible Seminary, as chairman of the Tokyo Museum of Biblical Archaeology, and as editor of *Exegetica: Studies in Biblical Exegesis*, makes a significant contribution to this continuing discussion in his extensive analysis of 1 Samuel.

In this first of two volumes on the Samuel narrative (vol. 2 is in process), Tsumura presents his own translation of 1 Samuel accompanied by copious footnotes that reference alternative translations, explanations, and cognate discussions. Four indices are included: "Subjects"; "Modern Authors"; "Scripture References"; and "Foreign Words"

(Hebrew; Akkadian; Ugaritic; Arabic; Aramaic; Sumerian; Punic/Phoenician; Syriac; Hittite/Anatolian; Egyptian; Ethiopic; and Greek). Thorough research characterizes the preparation of both translation and commentary and gives ready evidence of the author's control of the wide range of literature available on the subject matter. An 18-page "Select Bibliography" follows hard on the heels of his 80-page introduction. Through the use of appropriately-placed excursuses, various interpretive cruxes are addressed.

The author's approach to the textual challenges of the Samuel material moves in the direction of explanation and acceptance of more MT readings—and hence fewer LXX readings—than has been typical since the discovery of the Qumran materials. It is perhaps in large measure for this reason that McCarter's Anchor Bible work is ubiquitously referenced throughout the volume. It is also somewhat ironic that Tsumura appears to align himself more with Fokkelman (see above, vol. 1, pp. 7–8) on this matter, while at the same time rejecting his method of textual analysis (Tsumura, p. 20, n. 86).

Tsumura's Introduction includes a succinct description of Discourse Analysis (SETTING–EVENT–TERMINUS/TRANSITION) together with the assertion that his is the first commentary on the Samuel material to apply the method. The commentary is characterized by a consistent application of the method throughout, although in places the results appear somewhat contrived or forced. My concern is that Discourse Analysis not be used as a "mold," with the result that every text poured into it comes out with the same shape. Tsumura is certainly right in his drive to "learn as much as possible about the historical background" (p. 23) of a narrative event; but often what results is a greater attention to "event" than to the textual presentation of the event. At times the analysis tends to "flatten" the narrative through attempts to reconstruct the historical background and does not engage the significant contours of the text. An illustration of the point is seen in Tsumura's treatment of 1 Samuel 20:1–24a ("David Meets Jonathan") in which he seems to devote more attention to resolving the chronology of the event than to the narrative significance of the event.

In his Introduction and in places throughout the commentary, Tsumura seems to hold holistic literary approaches to the text of Samuel somewhat at arm's length, in part because in his judgment, such approaches are more concerned with the literary qualities of text than with the historical realities of text. Attention to "intertextuality," he demurs, tends to detract from a proper hermeneutical concentration on authorial intent (p. 23). To be sure, it is appropriate, even necessary, to give serious attention to the "languages, conventions and genres" (p. 20) of the author/redactor and that to do so requires historical research (p. 20). And as he asserts a few pages later, the text must be analyzed "linguistically in its immediate context" (p. 23). However, there exists a significant amount of serious textual analysis that has demonstrated both the apparent intentionality of literary features in text and the apparent intentionality of various forms of intertextuality, both of which enhance one's understanding of an author's/ editor's "theological purposing" of a narrative.

It is not possible for one writing a commentary on the Samuel material to address everything that might legitimately be addressed. But given the canonical integration of the Samuel material into the larger body of composition—the Former Prophets—Tsumura might have given a little more attention to the integration of the Judges and 1 Samuel material. This is only mentioned in his opening paragraph of discussion of the "Story of Samuel" (p. 103). Discussion of various texts, particularly in 1 Samuel 1–14, provides engaging opportunities to demonstrate more than chronological associations of the Samuel narrative with that of the Judges. Perhaps it is Tsumura's reluctance regarding intertextuality that discouraged him from more actively pursuing such lines of comment.

Tsumura's hesitancy regarding the use of various literary techniques is reflected in his resistance to Birch's suggestion that the narrator's reference to Eli's "diminished vision" (3:2) is, in effect, a *double entendre*—namely, that Eli's eyesight as well as his spiritual perception were diminished. Tsumura's evaluation of the suggestion is, "One might wisely avoid making allegorical interpretation especially in our 'post-modern' society in which multiple readings are encouraged and meanings are admittedly created by readers" (p. 175). This reviewer agrees with Tsumura that "postmodern" approaches to the text reflect the ability to "go well beyond" authorial intent; however, these early narratives of 1 Samuel use diction, which by reason of the narrative context, invites such exploration.

In places, Tsumura appears to make unwarranted assumptions when analyzing a text. Apparently referring to Eli's comment to Hannah, recorded in 1:17 ("Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your request that you asked from Him"; my translation), Tsumura makes the observation, "Evidently she was deeply encouraged by Eli's words, which she took as God's promise" (p. 122). Coming at the conclusion of a conversation that has highlighted Eli's obvious "misreading of Hannah's moving lips," it seems inappropriate to read Eli's statement of verse 17 as a source of "deep encouragement" to Hannah. It is not clear whether Tsumura assumes a larger conversation, but his treatment of what is preserved in the text suggests such.

In spite of all of the observations made above, Tsumura has presented to both the church and the academy a worthy contribution to the challenge of understanding more appropriately a portion of the OT that has long been mined more for its moral lessons than for its theological contribution.

On a minor note, it appears the first use of the name "Saul" should be replaced by the name "Samuel" in the statement on 1 Samuel 10:1: "Later Saul will demonstrate publicly by lots that Saul was chosen by the Lord" (p. 281).

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Psalms, vol. 1 (1–41). By John Goldingay. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 639 pp., \$44.99.

This is the first of three volumes by John Goldingay on the Psalms in the new Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms series edited by Tremper Longman III. Currently available in this series are *Proverbs* (Longman) and *Song of Songs* (Richard S. Hess). The other biblical books to be included are *Job* and *Ecclesiastes*. Distinctive to this commentary series is a deep focus on the message of each book and a coverage committed to this highly poetic and literary corpus. As Longman points out, these are texts that do not easily fit into redemptive history, a fact that no doubt contributes to their modern neglect (p. 8). While the books are designed for seminary students and pastors, scholars and serious Bible study leaders are in no way excluded (p. 8).

Broadly speaking, each commentary contains an introduction (authorship, date, etc.), sectional interpretation, and theological implications that flesh out each section. The interpretation focuses on the text's historical context. The theological implications make particular connections to other units of the canon, both OT and NT. The Psalter, however, does not exactly fit even these rubrics. So Goldingay's volume reflects the compositional nature of the Psalter. Following the preface material (pp. 7–13) and abbreviations (pp. 15–19) is an engaging Introduction (pp. 21–78)—alone worth the price of

the book. Following the analysis of the Psalms (pp. 79–590) is a glossary that focuses on significant terms in Psalms 1–41 (pp. 591–601); a bibliography of general works (pp. 602–5); and then subject, author, and Scripture (and ancient writings) indices round out a well-bound volume (pp. 606–39).

Covering fifty-seven pages, the introduction reveals Goldingay's hermeneutical schema and passion. In it, he addresses the following subjects: The Psalms and History; David and the Psalms; The Modern Quest; Psalmody before the Psalms; The History behind the Psalter; The Psalms as Poetry (i.e. Rhythm, Language, Form); The Psalms and Worship (i.e. Praise, Invitation, and Reasons); The New Year Festival; Thanksgiving or Testimony; Prophecy and Wisdom; Psalms and Spirituality (i.e. Individual and Community; Prayer; Confession of Sin; Trust; Intercession; Anger; The Interrelationship of Praise and Prayer); and The Psalms as Theology (i.e. God: Involved; Creator; Sovereign; at Home; King and Messiah; Life and Death; The Psalms and the New Testament). Where other writers might sprinkle their commentary with excursuses, Goldingay front-loads it with topical discussions in order to orient the reader to his interpretation. Rather than isolating exegetical issues in a commentary on 41 psalms, I believe it is more effective to note salient points throughout Goldingay's introduction, observing how his approach interacts with some of these psalms.

For Goldingay, the Psalter's five-fold division, on analogy with the Torah, hints at "a teaching manual for worship and prayer," leaving "God's people with 150 examples of things one can say to God" (p. 23). Further, that fact that women did "compose" psalms outside the Psalter (e.g. Judg 5; 1 Sam 2) leads Goldingay to wonder whether key psalms may reflect a "raped woman" (Psalm 6), an "abused woman" (Psalm 11), or a "devout widow" (Psalm 16; p. 32). Anonymity can aid applicability. Acknowledging the difficulties in interpreting Davidic references in psalm headings, Goldingay simply translates these superscriptions as "David's," choosing to "leave the meaning of the expression open" (p. 28). Goldingay holds that Jesus' references to David in the psalms are merely examples of conventional language, the way people of that culture spoke. Thus Jesus' reference to David and Psalm 110, for example, did not constitute "a dominical declaration on its authorship," nor is Jesus' argument dependent on it (p. 28). For Goldingay, such psalms are not disclosing prophecy but God's promises and commitments by way of his prophets (p. 57). The author notes his disagreement with D. C. Mitchell, who employs an eschatological-messianic approach (*The Message of the Psalter* [1997]; p. 72 n. 89). Rather, Goldingay employs more of a historico-didactic thrust, letting the psalm's message address Christian thinking. For example, he claims Psalm 2 is about a present, not coming king. Through the Holy Spirit, the NT brings a new significance in application to Jesus (p. 72 n. 89). Thus, Goldingay does not read the psalms through some kind of NT "filter."

Acknowledging the proposals of scholars to ascertain the argument of the Psalter, Goldingay remains unconvinced of purposefulness seen in the order, and is content instead to see a "structure of spirituality" through the interrelationship of prayer and worship as the speech forms (pp. 37, 58). He is literarily sensitive, preferring critical categories of psalm types, and then organizing them "into various ways of speaking to God and being addressed by God" (p. 37), whether through evidence of liturgy (e.g. "I," "we," "you"; Psalm 118), the sheer force of poetry's suggestiveness (e.g. Psalm 23), or the insight of deep reflection (e.g. Psalm 38).

It is quickly evident that serious theological digestion on Goldingay's part provides rich pastoral insights. When addressing laments—Goldingay prefers the term "protests"—he celebrates the expression of pain and anger as addressing a responsible person, not mere emotional release (pp. 66–69). Acknowledging both divine and human anger, the author holds that "anger has an essential place in prayer" (p. 66). For Goldingay, even the notorious imprecations against one's enemies have not been laid

aside, but deepened in the NT by the addition of prayer *for* one's enemies (cf. Psalm 69 in Acts 1:16, 20; Rom 11:9–10).

In his textual analysis, Goldingay has compiled his own translation for Psalms 1–41, a process that helps elucidate the poem's structure. Further, he also works through the Septuagint, Jerome, and the Targums, and consults the Vulgate, Syriac, and other Greek versions as he deems appropriate. Each analysis concludes with a section entitled "Theological Implications." Thus discussion of each psalm begins with a fresh translation, includes profuse footnotes, and then marches through the strophic units of the psalm. The footnotes address issues of syntax, grammar, translations, secondary literature, and some interaction with church Fathers and reformers. Discussion of Psalm 2 covers fifteen pages, four for the theological implications alone.

The strength of Goldingay's commentary is twofold: multiplex method and biblical-theological richness. Refreshingly, this covers interests among serious pastors, divinity students, and scholars of the psalms. Next to the forthcoming volumes of Hossfeld and Zenger (*Psalms 2*, Hermeneia [2005]), the literary sensitivity and theological depth of this work may be the most refreshing contribution to Psalms studies in a generation. From syntax to soul care, Goldingay explores the Psalms in a manner that reflects contemporary insight, exegetical skill, ecclesial commitment, and theological passion honed over a lifetime.

From form-critical to literary approaches, Psalms scholarship today may be the most eclectic of any biblical literature (see recently Robert Alter, *The Book of Psalms* [New York: W. W. Norton, 2007]). Attempting such a breadth of coverage, most will find something to disagree with. I note two points. Sometimes Goldingay's translations seem to verge on the novel or distracting (e.g. "failures" in Ps 1:1, 5). Second, it is unfortunate that Goldingay does not interact with *NETS* (A. Pietersma, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000]). But these criticisms are minor. May this labor of love help return the Psalms to the pulpits and hearts of believers.

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Proverbs. By Tremper Longman III. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 608 pp., \$39.99.

The present volume is part of the Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms Series, for which Longman also serves as the editor. The design of the volumes is fairly traditional, consisting of a substantial introduction to each book followed by a detailed critical exposition of the Hebrew text. The series is primarily intended for people with seminary training (p. 12), although an attempt is made—as a rule quite successfully, in my opinion—to keep the discussion accessible to laypeople (e.g. languages are transliterated and technical issues are generally dealt with in the footnotes).

Two factors in particular justify limiting a commentary series to the Psalms and Wisdom literature. First, the unique content of these books has proven difficult to integrate into the redemptive-historical theological perspective of the OT. As a result, this corpus requires paying special attention to issues of theological interpretation, and the series is intended to do so from an evangelical view of the authority of Scripture. One means by which this is accomplished is by concluding each expositional unit of the main commentary with a section labeled "Theological Implications," in which "connections with other parts of the canon, both OT and NT, are sketched out along with the

continuing relevance of each passage for us today” (p. 13). Second, by devoting a commentary series exclusively to the Psalms and Wisdom books greater attention can be paid to their distinctive poetic and literary qualities and the effect they have on textual interpretation. All in all, given the unique literary and theological issues surrounding these books, the decision to limit the scope of the series in this way seems very sensible. Longman himself has already published a number of articles, books, and commentaries on other books from this portion of the canon—including his *How to Read Proverbs* (IVP, 2002)—and hence is well positioned to write a full-fledged commentary such as this.

The commentary proper is preceded by Longman’s introduction (pp. 21–87), which contains a competent and lucid discussion of issues of authorship; date; canonicity; text; and more. The treatment of the book’s genre and the poetic devices it utilizes (pp. 29–36) lays some important groundwork for the interpretation found in the actual commentary. Particularly interesting is Longman’s discussion of the structure of the book (pp. 36–42), in which he takes up the question of whether or not there is a conscious order or arrangement to the proverbs contained in chapters 10–31 that provides a larger interpretative context for the individual sayings. Here he interacts especially with Knut Heim, whose *Like Grapes of Gold Set in Silver* (de Gruyter, 2001) is an attempt to discern larger patterns of literary coherence in the collection by paying attention to the various phonological, semantic, syntactic, and thematic links throughout the chapters. While noting some occasional examples where individual proverbs appear to have been intentionally grouped together, Longman ultimately concludes that there is no systematic structure to chapters 10–31 as a whole.

The proper interpretative context for any individual proverb, according to Longman, is not a literary one based upon its placement in the book of Proverbs, but rather the situational context in which a proverb is actually spoken (p. 41). Unfortunately, it cannot be stated *a priori* just what the correct situational context for a given proverb is; according to Longman, this is precisely what the wise person needs to discern. While this may appear to be a frustrating non-answer, in my opinion Longman is correct. Other significant issues treated in the introduction include a discussion of Proverbs against the larger backdrop of ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, the relation between Proverbs and the other Wisdom books such as Qoheleth and Job (pp. 61–63), and the need to read Proverbs in the light of the NT (pp. 64–69). In regard to the last-mentioned topic, Longman is sensitive to the danger of eisegesis but nevertheless argues that ultimately it is necessary to read the book of Proverbs in its full canonical context, which includes the NT revelation of Jesus Christ’s person and work. One specific example of this that Longman discusses at some length is the relationship between the figure of “Lady Wisdom” in Proverbs 8 and the use of wisdom themes in NT christology (e.g. Matt 11:18–19; 1 Cor 1:30; Col 2:3). Overall the treatment is well done, though a more expansive discussion would have been welcome.

In the commentary proper, Longman proceeds chapter by chapter, presenting his own translation of the Hebrew text, with accompanying textual and philological notes, which then provide the basis for his expositional and theological remarks. The terse character of the biblical proverbs is often open to widely differing translations and resulting interpretations, and one will not always agree with Longman’s particular decisions, but the quality of the notes is extremely high throughout and will prove stimulating for the critical student.

In addition to the obligatory bibliography, the commentary includes an appendix consisting of brief topical essays on a number of prominent themes in the book of Proverbs (e.g. wealth; anger; business ethics; family relationships; laziness; gossip; and more). Given both the limitations of the proverb as a literary form (by its very nature a proverb does not provide a comprehensive treatment of a subject), as well as the lack

of a systematic organization to the main collection (chaps. 10–31), these short essays help provide a fuller sense of the book's overall teaching on a given subject. While Longman's essays are meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive (p. 549), this is nonetheless an excellent resource many will find useful in preparing sermons and lessons on the biblical proverbs.

I highly recommend this commentary to serious students of the book of Proverbs. It would be a useful addition to the library of any pastor or seminarian.

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Jonah: A Handbook on the Hebrew Text. By W. Dennis Tucker, Jr. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006, xiv + 117 pp., \$19.95 paper.

This volume is apparently the first of a series entitled *The Baylor Handbook on the Hebrew Bible* edited by W. Dennis Tucker, Jr. The series is similar to an existing sister series entitled *The Baylor Handbook on the Greek New Testament*. The handbook is designed for students of biblical Hebrew who are transitioning from an introductory grammar to the domain of exegesis. Rather than being a technical commentary with a traditional introduction and interpretation, this work is limited to translation, lexical forms, syntactic issues, and elements of discourse analysis.

After brief opening comments, the introduction contains a concise presentation of the basic types of discourse, including the narrative, hortatory, expository, and embedded types. The rest of the book divides the text of Jonah into sections or pericopes. Each section begins with the author's English translation followed by a verse-by-verse analysis of the Hebrew text. For each Hebrew verse in a pericope, Tucker includes: (1) a description of the verse's discourse type is provided and an explanation of how the verse fits into the overall discourse structure of the passage; (2) the lexical form of each verb is provided; (3) the other constituents of the verse are discussed, including an explanation of the role each word plays in the grammatical structure of the verse; and (4) other exegetically significant details of the verse are discussed. The inclusion of these details makes this handbook more valuable to students and pastors than most other currently available reference works.

The value of the book is enhanced by a glossary of terms, a selected bibliography, and a subject and author index. Its value could have been further increased by the inclusion of thought-flow diagrams and outlines that would help students to more easily visualize the structure of the discourse.

A few editorial oversights are noted: "Tarshish" is parsed as a pronoun (p. 15). A pausal form is correctly identified (p. 36), but is incorrectly said to be "indicated by the presence of the *zaqeph qaton*." Pausal forms normally occur with the major accents *athnach* and *silluq*, but rarely with any other accent. When they do so, some significant rhetorical nuance is indicated. The significance of this unusual use of pause passes without comment. The same pausal form with *zaqeph qaton* occurs again (p. 61) without notice, and likewise similar circumstances occur on pages 69 and 86. In spite of these minor blemishes, this handbook begins a series of grammatical helps that will be of great benefit to students and pastors.

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The Honeymoon Is Over: Jonah's Argument with God. By T. A. Perry. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006, xxxvii + 250 pp., \$19.95 paper.

The landscape (or more appropriately seascape) of Jonah studies has been so well trodden that it is almost surprising that yet another book has come out dealing with this subject. Yet T. A. Perry's *The Honeymoon is Over: Jonah's Argument with God* attempts to plow new ground by challenging the commonly accepted understandings of these four short chapters.

This book cannot really be considered a standard commentary on Jonah. The customary introductory issues are not dealt with. Perry takes no time to establish the form of the text. He performs no textual criticism. He does not interact with well-known commentaries on the subject. Instead, we are given a discussion of Jonah's main themes illuminated by observations from rabbinic and western literature. Perry takes a rhetorical-critical approach and pays careful attention to such aspects as plot, setting, and structure. His familiarity with Jewish and Western literature is at once illuminating and entertaining as he interacts with rabbinic thought on Jonah and with writers like Camus, Molière, and La Fontaine.

Perry rejects the most common views of the book's central thesis. He disagrees with the idea that the book is trying to spur repentance in its readers. This is a view much of Judaism has accepted inasmuch as Jonah is read liturgically on the Day of Atonement. Perry also rejects the idea that nationalism is the central issue because Jonah, a Jew, did not want to see Gentiles repent. He rejects the idea that Jonah is disappointed because God made him look like a false prophet by not bringing the destruction he prophesied. Finally, Perry disagrees with the suggestion that justice was Jonah's principal concern lest God's reputation be tarnished.

Instead, Perry argues that the unifying theme of this book is a dialogue about love. He calls his hypothesis "The Love Plot." In light of Israel's commitment and faithfulness to the covenant, Jonah's expectation is that God will love them exclusively. "Jonah is concerned about the implications of God's mercy less towards the wicked than towards God's own beloved. . . . Jonah does not complain that God loves, only that He loves "too much," without discrimination or faithfulness, showing *rab khesed*, "too much" love for the wrong people (sinners), undoubtedly, but by that very fact *not enough love for his beloved*" (p. xxxi). He goes on to describe Jonah's feelings as those akin to a "jilted lover." In Perry's mind this theme serves better to unify the book because it makes use of the dialogical nature of the story. By this he means that the book takes very seriously the fact that God and Jonah are in a relationship and are attempting to persuade one another. Jonah is trying to persuade God that Israel deserves his mercy, while God is trying to persuade Jonah that mercy is a better principle to live by than merit. In short, Perry believes the context of a married couple working out their differences is the context in which to best understand this book. The book "encourages us to notice that Jonah and God have some serious issues to work out before their relationship can get back on track" (p. xxxii).

The book is divided into four sections. Parts 1 and 2 are the closest Perry gets to what could be traditionally called exegesis. He subjects each chapter to a rhetorical critical analysis, all the while advancing his argument that God and Jonah are in a dialogue. "The book of Jonah can thus be described as a dialogic in its attempt to negotiate a compromise between . . . diametrically opposing positions" (p. 202). For example, Perry begins his analysis of the text by arguing Jonah has a death wish that manifests itself not in chapter 4 but in the first few verses of chapter 1. As Jonah flees from the Lord, the consistent use of *yarad* suggests Jonah intends to "go down" in death. The reason for this death, however, is surprising. Perry argues that Jonah is trying to teach God

a lesson, namely, that the Gentiles are not worthy of his love, because they will in fact try to kill him to save their own lives. Jonah commits assisted suicide by being thrown overboard. God saves his prophet, but use of a fish only proves Jonah's point—the sailors had indeed cast him overboard to save their necks. Score one for Jonah. In the fish, the prophet cries out for death again, but God calls Jonah's bluff by granting his request. God wins because instead of taking the opportunity the prophet begs for deliverance. God saves him and the match is even.

In part 3, Perry takes up a discussion of the theology of Jonah with the expressed intention of rescuing those themes that have been overshadowed by the Jewish emphasis on repentance that have led to the liturgical reading of the book on Yom Kippur. Perry wants his readers to focus on love, prayer, repentance, and prophecy. His "argument for a more inclusive understanding of prophecy, one that stresses Jonah's love as well as God's, allows the human-divine relationship to be viewed as a prophetic dialogue of love based on prayer and repentance" (p. 76). Perry's suggestion that the book has hints of an "erotic theme" in its descriptions of God's relationship with Jonah lacks credibility. His section entitled "Erotic Clues and Vocabulary" is by his own admission an attempt to find "words and metaphors that occur in both non-erotic and erotic contexts in the Hebrew Bible." But most readers will agree the book of Jonah is anything but erotic, thus Perry's suggestion here appears to be nothing more than an attempt to find connection where there is none. Subsequent sections on prayer, repentance, and prophecy, however, are more helpful. In part 4, Perry reacts against the trend of seeing Jonah as a satire and argues instead that the book should be understood as being closer to prophecy than anything else.

This is not a typical commentary. Readers looking for solutions to textual or historical problems, applications for the church, or personal living will have to look elsewhere. But if you are interested in an example of rhetorical analysis and an exposition of Jonah that interacts with the literary world, both Jewish and western, *The Honeymoon is Over* will interest you.

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A Commentary on Micah. By Bruce K. Waltke. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xviii + 490 pp., \$34.00.

This work is an expansion, or rather, the completion, of Waltke's earlier commentary on Micah in the three-volume work *The Minor Prophets* edited by the late Thomas E. McComiskey (Baker, 1997). His attention to detail and passion to communicate these details contributed to editing out of half the material he had prepared. This current book includes the half that was previously deleted.

The introduction is well done and provides the reader a good orientation to the text, along with a concise but significant discussion of historical background and authorship (18 pp.). Waltke discusses such issues as "The Prophet"; "Historical Background"; "Date and Authorship"; "Form and Structure"; and "Text" surprisingly well in a mere eighteen pages. He defends a traditional pre-exilic date for Micah with the prophet himself being the author or at least the originator of messages that bear his name.

The book includes an overall outline of Micah in the table of contents and the general structure of the book is discussed some in the introduction under *Form and Structure*. He divides the book (apart from the superscription [1:1]) into three cycles of

doom and hope. The first cycle has oracles of doom from 1:2–2:11 followed by a short oracle of hope in 2:12–13. The second cycle has three oracles of reproach (3:1–12) followed by a number of oracles that provide hope for a restored remnant (4:1–5:14 [5:15]). The third cycle continues with oracles of doom beginning in 6:1 and running through 7:7, followed by a closing song of victory in 7:8–20 (pp. 14–15).

Waltke demonstrates broad research into texts for the translation as well as a broad and useful bibliography, although as he states in the preface, it is not as up to date as he would like due to the fact that most of this research was done for the original publication in 1997.

After the introduction we have the presentation of the commentary. The commentary is divided according to what he perceives are the “messages” or the twenty-one individual oracles of Micah. Although the tripartite structure is shown in the table of contents and discussed some in the introduction, there is no real “introduction” or orientation to each of the three sections. The commentary simply moves from one pericope to the next throughout. Each section includes a translation by the author followed by a section of exegesis and another of exposition. In each section of exegesis, readers will find a detailed and thorough discussion of the Hebrew grammar along with the inclusion of some of the debate on difficult and critical issues surrounding a particular word or verse. In most cases, Waltke provides the Hebrew word (transliterated) followed by the English translation (but only in the first usage), along with a valuable discussion of the reasons for his choices regarding the text. Where there is any question or dispute (and there are many), the discussion is extended. In the exposition following each pericope, he includes an excellent outline of the oracle being discussed, which proves very helpful to understanding the message of the particular unit when combined with the comments following.

On the positive side, there is a lot of excellent detail and explanation of difficult issues in translation and interpretation as well as the inclusion of some of the scholarly debate on the issues. It is here that Waltke demonstrates his passion for details. Some sections also include appropriate comments of application or relevance for the church today, or, at least, sufficient comment to direct most readers to see the parallels between Micah’s message and the situation in North America today.

Reading through the exegesis I found a good deal of information that would be helpful to a pastor or layman who wanted to preach or better understand the prophet Micah. I fear, however, that much will be lost to the average reader because it has been buried in the details of the discussion concerning the translation. I also discovered many places in the exposition (supposedly more oriented to the average pastor or layman) that occasionally the scholarly discussions continued, as in the discussion of the historical situation behind the oracle of salvation in 2:12–13 and the lawsuit in 6:1–8. Although of interest to scholars and serious students, it is difficult to see this discussion as being of primary interest to the average pastor or layman. I found myself wishing much of the material in the exegesis section had been included in the section of exposition and vice versa.

Another area of suggested improvement is that of contemporary relevance. I found this area to be the most inconsistent and spotty. Waltke does an admirable job trying to show the connections to NT theology, although at times the “leaps” are not as clear as one would like. They are often not at first glance obvious and are not explained (much like a professor stopping in the middle of a lecture to make a “relevant application” of the subject at hand). At other times the comments are clear and relevant, and it was easy to see how they emanated from the text under discussion. Then, at other times, there was no real mention of contemporary relevance. Perhaps the text would have been well served to include a third topic under each section labeled “Contemporary Relevance” to address the issue more deliberately.

Finally, other than in the introduction, there is no real discussion of the overall message. The commentary is divided into twenty-one segments (the twenty-one oracles of Micah) with no significant discussion of the purpose or impact of combining the oracles into the three cycles of doom and hope. He notes, "The book is Micah's file of sermons delivered on different occasions. But his sermon files have been skillfully fitted together like pieces of a rose window in a cathedral, pieced together by catchwords and logical particles" (pp. 13–14). However, one will look in vain to find any significant discussion of how this arrangement contributes to our understanding of Micah's message or the overall impact of this arrangement. For the average pastor or layman, it would have been nice to have either an introduction or conclusion to each major section (chaps. 1–2, 3–5, 6–7) or at least a concluding chapter bringing the pieces back together.

The cover of this commentary highlights the book as follows: "Learned yet amazingly accessible, combining scholarly erudition with passion for Micah's contemporary relevance, this commentary will well serve teachers, pastors and students alike." However, it is not for the faint of heart. That being said, the breadth and depth of detail that is included in this work, especially in terms of the textual and grammatical discussions, make this an invaluable resource for the serious student and those wanting to do a detailed study of Micah.

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The One Who Is to Come. By Joseph A. Fitzmyer. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xvi + 205 pp., \$18.00 paper.

The One Who is to Come is the latest monograph by Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, professor emeritus of biblical studies at Catholic University of America. The author of more than forty books, Professor Fitzmyer is perhaps best known as the virtual anchor of the Anchor Bible Commentary series to which he has contributed the volumes on Luke, Acts, Romans, and Philemon. Beyond NT studies, Fitzmyer has made substantive scholarly contributions to the study of Second Temple Judaism, especially the Dead Sea Scrolls. Fitzmyer stands among a select few NT scholars who have linguistic facility with Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic (not to mention Latin, French, and German). He is a scholar to take seriously.

Taking its title from John the Baptist's question "Are you the one who is to come?" (Matt 11:3/Luke 7:19), this book establishes an etymological definition of the term "Messiah" before surveying the use (or non-use) of $\text{מָשִׁיחַ}/\chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ in the original texts of the Hebrew Scriptures, the Septuagint, the extra-biblical Jewish writings of the Second Temple Period, the NT, the Mishnah, the later Targums, and other Rabbinic writings. All this Fitzmyer accomplishes in an efficient 183 pages.

Fitzmyer's objective throughout is to define the original meaning of מָשִׁיחַ in its respective contexts, "so that the reader can see how in the course of time the concept of a Messiah as an awaited or future anointed agent of God (in the narrow sense) gradually emerged in Israel, then how it was used in post biblical Jewish writings in pre-Christian times, then how it was taken over by the early Christians who wrote the Christian Scriptures, and then how it continued to develop in the Jewish writings after the New Testament" (p. 7).

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 address the use of מָשִׁיחַ in the OT, where Fitzmyer discovers no trace of a developing messianic concept in any of the crucial passages except for Dan

9:25–26. This is because the term מָשִׁיחַ consistently emerges in the then-contemporary, this-worldly sense of “anointed one” either as priest, prophet, or king, but never in the sense of “the Messiah”—an awaited eschatological deliverer. This finding reinforces the conclusions of last century’s most important book on messianology, Sigmund Mowinckel’s *He That Cometh*, with which Fitzmyer dialogues throughout. Fitzmyer confirms Mowinckel’s observation that “‘Messiah,’ ‘the Anointed One,’ as a title or technical term for the king of the final age, does not even occur in the Old Testament” (p. vii). Fitzmyer parts company with Mowinckel, however, in eliminating all but Dan 9:25–26 as potential authentic Messianic prophecies: “Mowinckel should have been saying that the passages discussed in this chapter are concerned with ‘actual historical kingship,’ whether pre-exilic, exilic, or postexilic. Some of them may indeed present a picture of the ‘ideal king’ on David’s throne, but that is not yet a picture of ‘the Messiah’” (p. 55).

According to this study, full-fledged messianism ultimately emerged in the narrow sense at the time of the Jewish revolts against Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the context for the use of מָשִׁיחַ in Dan 9:25: “from the going forth of a word to return and build Jerusalem up until an *Anointed One*, a Prince, seven weeks.” “Here one finds the first occurrence in the Old Testament itself of מָשִׁיחַ used for an awaited Anointed One” (p. 62). Messianism thus found its inception in pre-Christian Palestinian Judaism during the second quarter of the second century BC.

Fitzmyer’s survey of the LXX detects little evidence of Septuagintal expansion of the messianic concept, with the minor exception of the very-hard-to-detect implications of Ezek 17:22d–23a. The differences in the Greek simply do not suggest messianic interpretation.

The chapter devoted to “Extrabiblical Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period” is the most comprehensive and substantive chapter in the book (51 pages). For it is in the Second Temple period, according to Fitzmyer, that messianism takes root in pre-Christian Judaism. It was during this time that the promise of a future David diversified into the vast array of forms that find expression in the Similitudes of *1 Enoch*, the Qumran texts, the *Psalms of Solomon*, the *Sibylline Oracles*, *4 Ezra*, *2 Baruch*, the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Philo, and Josephus. These writings reveal that though the messianic hope was “widespread among Jews in Palestine, it was not uniform in its conception or formulation and not universally held, even in the Diaspora” (p. 132). Jewish expectations envisioned kingly and priestly forms, Messiahs of Aaron and of Israel, of David and of Joseph, even a Messiah in the form of Elijah the prophet. The extra-biblical Jewish writings of the Second Temple period thus provide insight into the conceptual background of NT Christology, but they do not establish anything like a homogenous “trajectory” of messianic thought that finds fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth.

By contrast, the book’s treatment of the NT usage of “Messiah” takes up only 11 pages. Fitzmyer streamlines NT Christology by focusing exclusively on explicit word usage of μεσσίας/χριστός. He finds plausible the explanation of N. A. Dahl and E. Dinkler that early Christians first identified their crucified leader as Christ because of the inscription on Jesus’ cross that read “the King of the Jews” (Mark 15:26). Fitzmyer has little confidence in Jesus’ messianic self-awareness. The most that can be said is that the NT gives new messianic meaning to the non-messianic OT passages they quote and to which they allude. “This added meaning is what traditionally has been called ‘the spiritual sense,’ which differs from the literal religious sense of Old Testament passages in that it gives them a ‘plus’ meaning, a christological meaning which they do not have in the Hebrew Scriptures” (p. 145). A major feature of this new meaning is the concept of a suffering Messiah, which, according to Fitzmyer, “is found nowhere in the Old Testament or in any Jewish literature prior to or contemporaneous with the New Testament” (p. 142).

Especially educational for most Christian readers will be Fitzmyer's chapters on the use of Messiah in the Mishnah, Targums, and other Rabbinic writings. Like the rest of the book, Fitzmyer's English translations and brief introductions (authorship, historical contexts, dates) make these chapters accessible to lay readers without oversimplifying them to the detriment of his exegesis of the original texts. The most important trait of Rabbinic messianology, according to Fitzmyer, was its expectation of the "King Messiah" and the "troubles and signs" that were to precede his coming. Fitzmyer's survey charts how Rabbinic Judaism developed the Hebrew Scriptures in ways that sometimes accorded with Christian usage and sometimes directly contradicted it. Clearly distinctive is the rabbinical prioritization of the Messiah's future deliverance of Jews from Gentile oppression (especially Roman oppression in the earlier works).

My personal evaluation of *The One Who is To Come* is that Fitzmyer's exegetical judgment is unnecessarily minimalistic at strategic places. It is hard to understand why he does not take more seriously 2 Sam 7:8–14 as the origin of the messianic concept. Yes, the term מָשִׁיחַ does not occur in this passage, but the convergence of other crucial messianic themes are incontrovertible (i.e. the Davidic covenant, which focuses on the promise of a son of David who will build God's house, give Israel rest from her enemies, be called the Son of God, and establish the throne of God's kingdom forever). Can Fitzmyer be so confident that it was not this hope that gave rise to the messianic hope in Israel and that it was not this hope that gave birth to passages such as Ps 2:7, Isa 9:6–7, Isa 11:1–5, Jer 33:14–15, Ezek 34:23–24, 4Q246, and 4Q174? Similarly, it is hard to understand why Fitzmyer dismisses out of hand the messianic potential of Dan 7:13–14, which is after all a description of a *coronation* in which one like a son of man comes before the Ancient of Days to receive dominion, glory, and *kingship*. Understanding that the word "Messiah" means "anointed one" and that kings were anointed and that this figure in Dan 7:13–14 rules with kingship, a valid argument can be made that the figure of Daniel 7 is messianic in the basic sense and unquestionably eschatological in orientation. Finally, Fitzmyer's non-committal stance towards Jesus' messianic self-awareness does not, in my judgment, adequately consider Jesus' self-association with Isa 61:1 in Luke 6:20//Matt 5:3 and in Luke 7:22//Matt 11:2–4. Why not interpret the pattern of Jesus' miracles cited in Luke 7:22//Matt 11:2–4 as messianic against the conceptual background of Isaiah 35, 61, and now 4Q521? Much, much more could be said.

The One Who Is To Come provides a brief and yet remarkably comprehensive overview of messianology. All will agree that Fitzmyer addresses all the right texts in a most helpful arrangement. Fitzmyer's minimalist interpretations, however, are far from conclusive and, in my opinion, are not entirely persuasive.

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The Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other? By James R. Davila. Journal for the Study of Judaism Supplements 105. Leiden: Brill, 2005, vi + 279 pp., \$147.00.

James R. Davila, Lecturer in Early Jewish Studies at the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, has written a thorough and stimulating work that should cause especially NT scholars to take careful notice. His concern is that the texts frequently referred to as "Old Testament pseudepigrapha" (OTP) be understood in their proper contexts prior to being employed as background to fields such as NT or the history of religions of late antiquity. That nearly all such works were transmitted solely by Christians complicates the task at hand. Davila proposes a methodology for considering the full range of possible

authors (Jews, Christians, “God-fearers,” Samaritans, etc.), analyzing a substantial corpus of OTP and distinguishing those that are probably Jewish from those of more doubtful origins. While this approach is admittedly reserved and minimalistic, adopting Davila’s framework will help develop an “understanding of ancient Judaism which, while it has many lacunae, will be largely uncontaminated by irrelevant and misleading data” (p. 7). In other words, many documents frequently cited by NT scholars as Jewish background are actually Christian documents.

The book begins with an introduction, “Establishing the Origins of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha” (pp. 2–9). Here Davila builds on Robert Kraft’s insight that the proper place to begin the study of OTP that have been transmitted by Christians is with the earliest physical evidence for the existence of these works: the manuscripts that contain them and the earliest certain quotations of them in Christian literature. From there, we should move backwards to earlier contexts only as required by the evidence. Davila’s task, then, is to ask what criteria and methods we should use to isolate positive evidence (as opposed to arguments from silence) that might persuade us to move backwards to an older context (especially a Jewish one) for such works. The aim of this agenda is to reverse the burden of proof: assume a text preserved in Christian contexts is a Christian composition unless demonstrated to be Jewish.

In chapter 1, “Jewish Pseudepigrapha and Christian Apocrypha: (How) Can We Tell Them Apart?” (pp. 10–73), Davila explores ancient Judaism in relation to the Gentile world (both Christian and otherwise), using as his basis a corpus of incontrovertibly Jewish texts. He finds that, while some Jews and Christians were concerned with religious boundary maintenance, many took a more “eclectic if not syncretistic approach to their religion.” The difficulty in being certain of the distinction between syncretistic works and those espousing boundary maintenance means works written by Jews with less rigid views would be correspondingly harder to distinguish. Additional difficulties arise not only in defining what these groups are and are not, but also in sifting through the problematic matter of “common Judaism” to delineate what qualifies as coherence to “Judaism” in all its diversity in antiquity. Davila masterfully works through the data to determine a set of unquestionably Jewish texts as a preliminary corpus, from which, in part, he formulates an important set of “signature features”: pervasive patterns likely to indicate that the work is a product of boundary-maintaining Judaism. These are as follows: (1) evidence for composition in the pre-Christian era; (2) compelling evidence that the work was translated from Hebrew; (3) sympathetic concern with the Jewish ritual cult (esp. priesthood, temple, ritual purity, calendar, festivals, Sabbaths, and circumcision); (4) sympathetic concern with Jewish law/Torah and *halakhah*; (5) concern with Jewish ethnic and national interests, such as self-identification as Jewish, polemics against Gentile persecutions of Jews, and internal Jewish polemics; (6) certain features that may also allow us to distinguish Samaritan pseudepigrapha from Jewish ones, such as evidence of Samaritan Aramaic, prominence of Mt. Gerizim, etc. Some of these features overlap, and not all these are water-tight, but they serve as helpful heuristic categories through which we can consider numerous OTP.

Davila’s second chapter is “Did Christians Write Old Testament Pseudepigrapha That Appear to Be Jewish?” (pp. 74–119). His answer is a decisive “yes.” He arrives at this by looking at selected Christian sermons, scriptural commentaries, and poetic epics. In this way Davila shows that Christians did write OTP and that at least some did not find it incoherent to write a work that dealt with OT themes and yet never mention a Christian doctrine or quote the NT or any Christian literature. The implication is that if even retellings of OT events in Christian sermons, commentaries, and poems occasionally could be mistaken for Jewish works, how much more might we expect that some OTP (or better, Christian apocrypha) composed by Christians with good reason to hide their authorship could readily be misunderstood as Jewish.

Chapter 3 is on “Jewish Pseudepigrapha” (pp. 120–63), in which Davila applies the methodological principles and advances of the first two chapters to the surviving corpus of OTP to arrive at a list of nine documents that are Jewish beyond reasonable doubt. These are: *Aristeas to Philocrates*, *2 Baruch*, the Similitudes of Enoch, 4 Ezra, 3–4 Maccabees, the Latin Moses fragment (Assumption/Testament of Moses), Pseudo-Philo’s *Biblical Antiquities*, and the *Psalms of Solomon*. An excursus to this chapter also looks briefly at the works of Josephus and Philo.

In chapter 4, “Some Pseudepigrapha of Debatable Origin” (pp. 180–216), Davila analyzes six OTP that are widely understood to be entirely or substantially Jewish compositions. Based on criteria established in earlier chapters, the author concludes that Sibylline Oracles 3 (main corpus) and 5 may be Jewish works, but other possibilities should not be dismissed. *Joseph and Aseneth* and the *Testament of Job* may be Jewish compositions, but positive evaluation is lacking, and too much weight is given to the argument that they lack indubitably Christian signature features. The two surviving recensions of the *Testament of Abraham* are Christian, and there is no convincing evidence for a Jewish *Urtext* behind them. Both the *Story of Zosimus* and its sources are almost certainly Christian rather than Jewish. Davila also offers an Excursus on the OT Apocrypha, which argues that, although it is possible that all the Apocrypha are of Jewish origin, Baruch could also have been authored by a God-fearer and the Wisdom of Solomon by a first-century, Gentile Christian or others.

The final chapter is a conclusion where the author summarizes his findings and provides some further analysis of the contribution his work has made, which is largely positive. It helps us to identify a substantial corpus of Jewish works of whose origins we can be quite confident. Indeed, assuming that simply because a work is named by a Jewish figure or, more commonly, that because a work is titled an OT pseudepigraphon it is therefore both Jewish and pre-dates the NT is highly problematic.

Davila acknowledges that much of the work done to date about the origins of a number of pseudepigrapha needs to be reconsidered, and he hopes to undertake the task to some extent himself. He is clearly correct in indicating that he expresses a process for evaluating the origins of pseudepigrapha transmitted by Christians more critically than has been done before. Indeed, his isolation of “signature features” as indicators of provenance is important at a number of levels. For NT scholars and others who do not specialize in the Jewish texts transmitted only by Christians but whose research leads them to make use of these texts, such works that are of questionable origin are best excluded from the formation of theories and reconstructions of early Judaism that are otherwise unsupported.

There are a number of points where one would like to give further consideration. These are largely centered on the articulation and employment of so-called “signature features.” First, Davila cites Christian works (a sermon by Augustine) that lacks any Christian signature features, which could be (mis)read as Jewish. This is a lucrative example. Does not the fact that it is publicly preached by a famous Christian give us undisputable evidence as to its provenance? Davila raises this very question but seems—in my mind—to leave the matter unresolved. Second, Davila acknowledges the “lack of obvious Jewish signature features” (p. 133) in the Similitudes of Enoch (*1 Enoch* 37–71), but still contends for Jewish provenance for other reasons. Yet this seems problematic in light of the importance of boundary-maintenance that Davila has otherwise espoused. Furthermore, if one can attribute a work to Jewish provenance without Jewish signature features, it is difficult to see how other works (such as *De Martyrio Maccabaeorum*) can, for their lack of signature features alone, be labeled Christian. Other texts, such as the *Testament of Abraham*, the *Testament of Job*, and *Joseph and Aseneth*, do not seem to receive the judicious employment of the author’s method that is afforded to others. At times a reader may wonder whether signature features can be used so

dogmatically, or can be used with caution on a case-by-case basis and considered with other factors.

The difficulties I outline above serve to underscore the complexity of the problems involved and the enormity of the task Davila undertakes. This is an important book in a series not commonly consulted by evangelicals—the impetus for this review—but nonetheless crucial for the tasks in which we seek to engage. In his further work on the subject, I think we would benefit from some careful discussion of how Jewish texts were historically transmitted and used in Christian circles and subsequently “Christianized.” This raises the more complicated matter of Christian interpolations in otherwise Jewish works, an issue that Davila could address only in passing concerning the infamous *Testimonium Flavium*. Davila’s observation that the provenance of a pseudepigraphon must be considered within the context in which it is preserved is important and often overlooked. Most important for my purposes is the correction that Davila provides for those whose “default assumption” is that whatever is not explicitly or inevitably Christian must be Jewish.

Davila’s book is a stimulating and valuable contribution to a neglected subject. A condensed form of parts of his labors is found in his “The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha as Background to the New Testament” (*ExpTim* 117/2 [2005] 52–57). This would make excellent reading for seminary courses where Jewish background is heavily employed in NT exegetical work. While the book is an important monograph on its subject, it will, for me, serve as a reference work, kept carefully by the Charlesworth volumes in my own library and consulted repeatedly and with care as exegesis in NT texts warrant consultation with any of the works known to us as OT pseudepigrapha.

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Interpreting the New Testament Text: Introduction to the Art and Science of Exegesis.
Edited by Darrell L. Bock and Buist M. Fanning. Wheaton: Crossway, 2006, 480 pp., \$29.99.

This two-part textbook is dedicated to Harold Hoehner and rooted in nearly thirty years of team-taught courses on exegesis at Dallas Theological Seminary. Part 1 includes contributions by Hoehner’s colleagues at Dallas, and part 2 contains illustrations of that method by friends and former students of Hoehner. The editors’ goal is to produce “competent exegetes” who can identify and explain interpretive options and justify their understanding of the biblical author’s intended meaning through text-critical, grammatical, lexical, historical-cultural, biblical-theological, and contextual levels of validation.

Darrell L. Bock, one of the two editors, begins with a chapter on the philosophy of exegesis (pp. 23–32). The four-part definition of *exegesis* is “setting forth the author’s/text’s meaning by interaction with the original languages through the use of sound hermeneutical principles with a view to applying the text to the contemporary church and the world” (p. 24). Validating one reading of a text over another is at the heart of exegesis (p. 26), which is not about rewriting what the commentaries say, though a judicious use of technical commentaries is encouraged. Instead, this textbook focuses on how to work with the tools commentators use to produce exegetical results: the Greek text, concordances, grammars, lexicons, theological word books, NT and Pauline theologies, and sources illuminating the socio-cultural and historical setting of the NT. The Holy Spirit’s role in biblical interpretation is not to help the modern-day reader know

the meaning of the text (which only comes through hermeneutically sound exegesis) but to help the reader welcome it as applicable to one's life and correlate God's truth with the whole of Scripture (p. 31).

Next, Daniel B. Wallace provides a brief introduction to NT textual criticism (pp. 33–56), explaining the materials, the methods (reasoned eclecticism is the way to proceed), and the practice of textual criticism. “The textual variant that has the greatest claim to authenticity will be found in the earliest, best, and most geographically widespread witnesses; will fit the context and the author's style; and will be the obvious originator of its rival reading(s) on a literary level” (p. 55). J. William Johnston then covers grammatical analysis (pp. 57–72). He provides general steps to grammatical analysis (pp. 59–60), walks through a detailed syntactical classification of every word or phrase in Eph 2:1–10, and concludes with an example of grammatical problem solving in the “be filled by the Spirit” command of Eph 5:18.

Jay E. Smith's chapter is on “Sentence Diagramming, Clausal Layouts, and Exegetical Outlining” (pp. 73–133). These three tools for tracing the argument of the text *at the paragraph level* enable us to determine the central idea of a unit of text. Though Smith is incredibly precise about the “how to's” of each exercise, nearly everything in this chapter is complex, difficult to master, and time-consuming (p. 74). I only assign exegetical outlining (pp. 105–31) to my students, offer them a lot of help along the way, and know that only a select few may ever do this again. Nevertheless, student evaluations tell me *not* to eliminate exegetical outlining from my course.

The chapter on lexical analysis (pp. 135–53) is also written by Bock. Bock surveys the complexities of meaning, the elements of a word, the basics of diachronic and synchronic word analysis, the book and computer resources available for doing word studies, nine common lexical fallacies, and the final step of checking one's results with the conclusions in BDAG, *TDNT*, and *NIDNTT*.

David K. Lowery covers exegetical problem solving or validation (pp. 155–66). Problems are solved at certain levels of validation, and exegetes should use the appropriate tools for each level. One should of course consult commentaries, but only as secondary sources in the resolution of debates and as pathways to the primary sources that they cite (p. 158). In the process of validation, exegetes (1) identify the nature of the problem; (2) list the interpretive options, the support cited for each, and the probable level of validation at which the problem will be solved (grammatical, lexical, theological, contextual, etc.); (3) weigh carefully the competing arguments for each view; (4) cite the best reasons for one's view and *specific* contextual reasons for that view; and (5) explain the significance of the interpretation for the meaning of the text and the impact it would have had on the original readers. Lowery closes with two illustrations: what Jesus taught about divorce in Matt 19:1–12 and the syntactical connection of “in love” in Eph 1:4.

In the chapter on “Background Studies” (pp. 167–96), Joseph D. Fantin identifies primary and secondary literary and nonliterary sources and discusses their responsible use for NT exegesis. Michael H. Burer, in the chapter on “Narrative Genre” (pp. 197–219), carefully defines unfamiliar terms—not always the case in the rest of the volume (a glossary of terms would have helped). I wish Burer would have addressed further how Acts is a guide for church life and practice today. John D. Grassmick carefully details the characteristics of NT letters, their status as occasional documents, their basic structure, and how they serve as “authoritative substitutes for the personal presence of the apostles” (p. 238). W. Hall Harris III offers guidelines for interpreting apocalyptic literature. He concludes with a study of three interpretive problems from Revelation (the locusts' identity in 9:1–11; “Babylon the Great” in 17:5; 18:2; and the “1,000” in 20:1–6). Bock contributes yet another chapter on one of his specialty areas: the use of the OT in the NT (pp. 255–76). Buist M. Fanning, Bock's coeditor, writes the chapter on the use of biblical theology in exegesis (pp. 277–91), and Timothy J. Ralston's chapter

on application, ethics, and preaching (which my students would have difficulty following) concludes part 1 of the volume (pp. 293–310).

In part 2, “Exegetical Examples and Reflections” (pp. 311–461), I. Howard Marshall opens with how he introduces his class on Mark and the ten things he considers as he walks us through a study of Mark 1:1–13. Narry F. Santos highlights the paradox of authority and servanthood in Mark 1:1–15. Joel F. Williams wrestles with Jesus’ parabolic statement to the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7:27, “using insights from the character of narration itself and from Mark’s narrative technique” (p. 341). This is one of the few chapters that concludes with a penetrating application that challenges the budding exegete (with regard to the woman’s humility, wisdom, and persevering faith). Edwin M. Yamauchi touches on a wide range of background material to show why the eunuch in Acts 8:26–40 was not from Ethiopia (pp. 351–65). Don N. Howell, Jr. studies the use of OT quotations in Rom 15:9b–12 (pp. 367–75). David Catchpole does an exegesis of Gal 3:10–13, showing how it correlates with the discrete summary of the Pauline gospel in 2 Cor 5:21. Scott S. Cunningham solves three problems in Eph 2:19–22, and Helge Stadelmann highlights the historical-cultural background of Jewish ritual baths to explain Paul’s baptismal metaphor in Eph 5:26. Timothy B. Savage provides exegetical and devotional insights related to the image of God and the cross of Christ in Phil 2:6–7 (pp. 409–13). E. Earle Ellis prepares for the exposition of Col 1:12–20 by highlighting the historical background of the text and its literary structure. Donald J. Verseput studies Jas 1:19–27 “within its first-century context to show that it is a connected argument” (p. 429) that addresses a common problem in ancient associations: conflict control within the assembly. Finally, W. Edward Glenny illustrates the value of careful lexical work to determine the meaning of 1 Pet 2:2a, and Herbert W. Bateman IV uses a Greek structural outline (thankfully with English translation underneath) to trace the flow of the argument of 3 John.

To briefly conclude, if anything, this textbook provides more than what I can use to teach a high quality, college-level exegesis course, but I will use it selectively and am glad to have it. The editors should have probably required *all* of the writers to include the English translation of the Greek words, phrases, or verses being discussed and to put Greek in parentheses afterwards. This would facilitate students learning Greek exegesis—the goal of the volume—rather than leaving gaps in their understanding when they do not know Greek as comprehensively as their professors.

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Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament: On the Exegetical Benefit of Grammatical Precision. By Denny Burk. New Testament Monographs 14. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2006, xv + 179 pp., \$55.00.

A. T. Robertson, perhaps the most learned Greek grammarian ever to trod American soil, once roamed the hallowed halls of Southern Seminary. His Baptist descendants—including Denny Burk, who now teaches at The Criswell College—still care about the language he loved. Burk wrote his doctoral dissertation at Southern Seminary, and a revised version of that dissertation has now appeared under the title *Articular Infinitives in the Greek of the New Testament*.

Burk begins with a simple and elegant introduction to modern linguistics. When he describes the history of research, Burk shows that the use of the article with infinitives has been overestimated when one considers its semantic value (the way it adds to the

meaning of the word) and underestimated when one considers its structural meaning (the syntactic contribution the article makes to a phrase).

In chapter 2 Burk explains what his thesis means. He argues that the article is a function word, not a content word, and that it is used with the infinitive to mark the infinitive's case and function, not to substantivize the infinitive or have semantic value as a "determiner." To use one of Burk's illustrations, the article is part of the mortar that holds the bricks of the sentence together. When the article is used with the infinitive, its only significance is syntactic: it makes explicit a grammatical or structural relation but does not substantivize the infinitive or determine it as definite. Burk observes that the 324 articular infinitives in the NT fall into two broad categories: 200 of these are governed by a preposition, and 124 are not governed by a preposition. Chapter 3 deals with those that do not follow prepositions, and chapter 4 examines those that do. In chapter 3 the argument is that the article with the infinitive "marks" two grammatical features: the case of the infinitive and/or its particular syntactical function. With nominatives and accusatives, the article marks the infinitive's case, designating it as either the subject or the object. With genitives and datives, the article marks the infinitive with meanings associated with these cases. Chapter 4 shows that "the article is grammatically obligatory when an infinitive serves as the object of the preposition" (p. 77). Burk holds that the cases control the use of prepositions, and the articles used with infinitives mark the case of those prepositions. Having tested his thesis against every occurrence of the articular infinitive in the NT, in chapter 5 Burk tests his conclusions from the NT against the Greek of the Septuagint. Burk's ability to explain all apparent exceptions to his thesis makes his work particularly compelling.

The exegetical significance of this study is presented in chapter 7, where Burk first discusses the implications of his work for the study of Greek grammar and then demonstrates its benefit for the interpretation of the NT. Helpful visual aids are scattered throughout the volume, and the study concludes with an important set of tables organizing the articular infinitives found in the NT and other Greek literature.

Burk shows the crucial difference a right understanding of articular infinitives makes using five texts as examples: Mark 9:10; Acts 25:11; Rom 13:8; Phil 2:6; and Heb 10:31. Among these examples, Phil 2:6 bears the most theological weight; so the fruit of Burk's study for understanding this text will be briefly considered here. N. T. Wright follows BDF in the opinion that the article with the infinitive in the final phrase of Phil 2:6, "*the* being equal with God," is an anaphoric article pointing back to the initial phrase of the verse, "the form of God." On this understanding, "being equal with God" is equivalent to or synonymous with "the form of God." Yet if, as Burk argues, the article is not anaphoric but appears as a grammatical necessity, marking the components of the double accusative construction, "equality with God" is not connected to "the form of God." Rather, the articular infinitive designates "*the* being equal with God" as the object, whose complement is "a thing to be grasped" in the double accusative construction. Burk thus renders the sense of the verse as, "Although Jesus existed in the form of God, he did not consider equality with God as something he should go after also" (p. 139). The payoff, then, of Burk's careful grammatical investigation is that Phil 2:6 affirms the *ontological equality* of Father and Son, while maintaining the *functional subordination* of the Son, even in his pre-existent state (cf. pp. 139–40, n. 46).

This is a profoundly significant book, and all future study of this issue will benefit from Burk's work. Thanks to the patient, careful study done by Burk, anyone who wants to understand this feature of the Greek language need only take up his book and read.

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The Historical Jesus in Context. Edited by Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison, Jr., and John Dominic Crossan. Princeton Readings in Religions. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006, xi + 440 pp., \$22.95 paper.

For novices entering into the realm known as the “study of Christian origins,” or the more narrowly defined field called the “study of the historical Jesus,” the initial foray can be extremely daunting. There are several reasons as to why this is so. First, Jesus lived at a time of political and economic upheaval, cultural crisis, and intense (often polemical) theological expression. To the extent that Jesus is a product of his culture, any attempt to account for his words or actions by appealing to a single, totalizing background will likely run aground on the shoals of oversimplification. The person reading about the historical Jesus for the first time will therefore likely be overwhelmed by the maelstrom of cultural, intellectual, and textual forces that may be convincingly proffered as having shaped the Galilean. Second, the quest of the historical Jesus, as NT scholars are well aware, raises its own special sets of problems. What we can know and not know about the historical Jesus, *how* we know anything (methodology)—all these are of course issues of on-going debate. To complicate matters further, methodologies are often underwritten by certain historical assumptions regarding Jesus’ context and vice versa.

Thus, when a book entitled *The Historical Jesus in Context* comes along, those who have been around the barn of Jesus studies a few times may be forgiven for being initially suspicious: “Context according to whom?” Soon enough, however, suspicions are dispelled. As it turns out, the book’s unwillingness to settle that question (“Who decides Jesus’ context?”) simultaneously makes for its greatest weakness and greatest strength.

The Historical Jesus in Context, edited by Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C. Allison, Jr., and John Dominic Crossan, is the twelfth volume of the Princeton Readings in Religion Series. The series has by design focused not so much on foundational or canonical texts, but on diverse sources that have the potential of illuminating the tradition in question. In the case of the present volume, a star-studded cast of twenty-nine contributors (making for twenty-eight articles, with an introduction by Levine) have come together in order to translate and bring to bear certain primary sources on questions of interest in Jesus studies. Topics include (but are not limited to) the following: “Archaeological Contributions to the Study of Jesus and the Gospels” (Jonathan L. Reed); “Josephus on John the Baptist and Other Jewish Prophets of Deliverance” (Craig A. Evans); “The *Chreia*” (David B. Gowler); *The Psalms of Solomon* (Joseph L. Trafton); “Philo of Alexandria” (Gregory E. Sterling); “Narratives of Noble Death” (Robert Doran); and “Isaiah 53:1–12 (Septuagint)” (Ben Witherington III).

The above random sampling of articles gives an idea of the diversity of subject matter. Whereas Reed’s article on archaeology obviously deals with issues of material culture, Evans examines the common themes of various first-century messianic movements, as reported by Josephus. Gowler’s piece deals with a particular rhetorical form, but Trafton’s treatment of the *Psalms of Solomon* highlights an important Second Temple Jewish text. From here to Sterling’s piece on Philo, to Doran’s review of ancient literary presentations of dying well, to Witherington’s comparison of the LXX and MT Fourth Servant song—there is, it seems, something for everyone. Although I suppose one could always add more chapters, with more background, one would be hard pressed to improve on the list, a kind of “top twenty-eight” points of interest.

As one might expect, there is some diversity among the chapters with regard to the degree of editorializing. For example, in his approach George W. E. Nickelsburg (*First and Second Enoch: A Cry against Oppression and the Promise of Deliverance*) is both cautious and dispassionate: whereas “non-canonical texts enlighten the New Testament material . . . [a]t the same time, they warn us against simple answers and straightforward solutions” (p. 93). Dennis R. MacDonald, by contrast, in reiterating his well-

known thesis of a Homerized gospel, seems excessively strident. In summarizing, he writes: “[i]n other words, one can trace all stories in the New Testament concerning Jesus’ demise to Mark’s literary creativity. What is more, the earliest Evangelist seems not to have incorporated a preexisting Passion narrative and need not have known a coherent oral narrative of Jesus’ death. Virtually all of Mark 15:22–46 seems to have been generated from biblical texts and *Iliad* 22 and 24” (p. 380). Even if MacDonald is, as he says, willing to accept the historicity of Jesus’ death, this is nevertheless quite a statement, especially coming as it does in a twelve-page article without footnotes or annotation. Bultmann and Dibelius—not to mention a good number of historical Jesus scholars today—would be puzzled by such judgments.

Of course, MacDonald can claim not only having sympathizers on this point but also having laid out his case more fully elsewhere, as have most of these contributors, who are, rightfully, peddling what they peddle best. Alongside their translation of their passages (be it snippets or several pages) the contributors are, more or less, providing manageable and accessible summaries of conversations that have taken place elsewhere and on a more detailed and complex level. More exactly, they are providing one side of those conversations—their own.

However, this only throws into relief the question as to the intended audience of *The Historical Jesus in Context*. On the one hand, the introductions, presuming little prior knowledge on the part of the reader, are targeted for a well-educated (college level or higher) but nonetheless non-expert audience. On the other hand, the variety of opinion and sometimes contradictory judgments between contributors may seem unnerving to the uninitiated reader. For example, while Mary Rose D’Angelo (“Abba and Father: Imperial Theology in the Context of Jesus and the Gospels”) states that “the evidence that the word *abba* as important to or even used by Jesus is, at best, extremely slender” (p. 64), Ian H. Henderson (“Apuleius of Madauros”) writes that “addressing God by a private address (‘Abba’)” is one of two of “Jesus’ best-attested speech habits” (p. 197). Or again, according to Reed, “[a]rchaeology shows rather clearly that the Galilean world of Jesus was Jewish . . . [and] relatively sheltered from the overt Pagan aspects of urbanization” (p. 54), while more than several contributors take the same “overt Pagan aspects” of the first-century world as their determinative starting point in understanding Jesus. If this anthology is a primer for lay readers, the lay readers may well soon find themselves in a maze of conflicting interpretations.

Levine’s well-written introduction smoothes over some of these difficulties and, as it were, moderates the panel of experts in such a way as to highlight the strengths and more interesting aspects of their argument. Yet I wonder if more could be said as to the nature of some of the implicit disagreements, but, if I can dither on the point, perhaps the book is effective as it stands. Sometimes letting the dissonant chips fall where they may provides good opportunity for comparison and instruction.

It is the instructional setting, by the way, that seems just the right context for *The Historical Jesus in Context*. With appropriate pedagogical oversight, the book would serve excellently as a primary source textbook. Professors and teachers will also find this a worthwhile personal reference as they prepare their own lectures on Jesus. The introductions, even if they are not consistently persuasive, are merely introductions. The heart of the matter is in the ancient texts themselves—let the reader understand! For this reason, the student of Christian origins and/or the historical Jesus will find this book eminently worthwhile. There is, as far as I know, no other book on the market that brings the primary textual backgrounds on Jesus together in one place. Despite the difficulties of achieving coherency and consistency, inherent in such a project, here is a very good place to start.

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Fabricating Jesus: How Modern Scholars Distort the Gospels. By Craig A. Evans. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 290 pp., 19.95.

Craig Evans is Payzant Distinguished Professor of New Testament and director of the graduate program at Acadia Divinity College in Wolfville, Nova Scotia. In *Fabricating Jesus* he attempts to discredit much of what passes for historical Jesus scholarship in current academia. The book is divided into eleven chapters with two appendices, a glossary, a list of abbreviations, endnotes, a list of recommended reading, with indices of authors, subjects, Scripture, and extracanonical ancient sources. This work is written for the non-specialist, interested layman, open-minded skeptic, or anyone who has been troubled by recent critical work on the Gospels and the historical Jesus.

Evans begins his work with a slightly sarcastic (but well-deserved) nod to Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* by starting with a page simply headed "Fact." Under this word are statements such as: "The secret version of the Gospel of Mark, allegedly found in the Mar Saba Monastery, is a modern hoax"; or "Jesus was not a Cynic; in all probability he never encountered a Cynic" (p. 7). This setting forth of the conclusions that will be argued for in the rest of the book is a clever rhetorical flourish and a reminder that all was not what it seemed in other books that claimed to set forth the facts.

In the preface, Evans writes about his own spiritual journey and his interaction with many of the "greats" in historical Jesus studies. He goes on to state categorically and without embarrassment that he is a Christian and is doing his work from a Christian standpoint. He points out that graduate studies did not result in the loss of his faith. These studies did, he states, cause him to rethink some of his conclusions, but he is still a Christian and writes as one committed to Christ.

The rest of the book deals with many of the critical works that have been written in recent years about Jesus or the Gospels. He begins, in the first two chapters, by asking methodological questions about much of the work that is being done today. In chapter 1 he introduces the reader to the major players in historical Jesus scholarship, dividing the group into "old and new school skeptics." In chapter 2, Evans points out a number of problems with the methods that most critical Jesus scholars use. Here Evans argues that Jesus was not illiterate, was highly interested in Scripture, and was very concerned about eschatology. He points out that starting with presuppositions to the contrary will inevitably cause one to end up with a skewed view of who Jesus was.

Chapters 3 and 4 are some of the strongest chapters in the book and reveal what a capable scholar Evans is. Titled "Questionable Texts," these chapters examine a variety of texts that have been foisted upon academia as well as the public as important sources, perhaps even more important than the canonical Gospels. Evans dates the Gospels conservatively (Mark in the 60s, Luke and Matthew in the 70s, John in the 90s) and then begins to take on the other works that are so often appealed to by critical scholars.

Evans does a particularly good job in dealing with the Gospel of Thomas. He is well informed and writes clearly so that a layman could walk away from this chapter with a firm grasp of several arguments as to why Thomas is believed to be dependant upon the Synoptics and not the other way around. Evans makes especially good use of Nicholas Perrin's recent work on Thomas and the use of Syriac catchwords (p. 73). Perrin's work could be the death blow for an early date for Thomas.

In chapter 4 Evans shows that other Gospels, such as the *Gospel of Peter*, the *Egerton Gospel*, the *Gospel of Mary*, and the infamous *Secret Gospel of Mark*, are simply not what they are purported to be by their supporters. His lucid explanation of the goings on behind the *Secret Gospel of Mark* will be helpful to anyone who is unfamiliar with this discussion. Evans is completely convinced by the work of Stephen Carlson and makes

a strong case that the document is a forgery and a hoax. Of course, *Secret Mark* still has its defenders (see the reviews of Evans's book on Amazon.com), but the facts speak for themselves, and Evans has laid them out clearly.

Chapter 5 of the work has Evans arguing that Jesus was not a Cynic. Evans admits that a few of the things that Jesus said might have been seen as the type of things a Cynic would have said, but these cannot be taken individually. One must look at the entire corpus of Jesus' life and work. Jesus was not crude, never suggested that religious faith was pointless, and never suggested that the gods were indifferent. In fact, Jesus urged his followers to believe in God because he cared deeply about his people. Evans goes on to argue that there is neither literary nor archeological evidence that there was a single Cynic in Galilee in the time of Jesus (p. 118).

Chapters 6 and 7 deal with the methodological problem of taking Jesus' sayings and deeds out of the context in which the Gospel writers place them. Evans points out that when the sayings are dealt with in this fashion, Jesus becomes no more than a "talking head—a 'laconic sage' who uses terse, almost unfeeling language" (pp. 123–24). Jesus begins to sound like a philosopher whose utterances are truisms and maxims. Evans argues in the next chapter that the evidence for the miracles of Jesus exists even outside the NT. In fact this evidence exists in some of the strangest of places such as a piece of magical papyrus and the Babylonian Talmud.

Chapter 8 deals with dubious uses of Josephus. There are many who seek to find any problem that is possible between a historical source and the NT. Some modern scholars have used the accounts of Josephus concerning John the Baptist and Pilate to create tensions with the Gospel accounts. Evans points out that one must look to the political climate in which Josephus was writing to find his motives for shaping his story and that one must be as skeptical of his account as one is of the NT.

Chapter 9 deals with the claims of Bart Ehrman in his work *Lost Christianities* concerning diversity within early Christianity. Here Evans points out that much of Ehrman's work is based on significant suppositions and that while there were some differences "there is absolutely no evidence of a significant difference in opinion with regard to the *core message* of the Christian faith" (p. 189, italics his).

Evans finishes the book with a strong argument for the Jesus of the Gospels. He points out the significant evidence for the resurrection and mentions that the "mighty Roman Empire, which smashed the state of Israel in a series of punishing wars (from AD 66–135), was itself overthrown by a messianic faith rooted in Israel's sacred Scriptures and its ancient belief in the God of Abraham" (p. 235).

This is a fine work, though not without its minor flaws. Evans, early on in the work, seems to blame the doctrine of inerrancy for the failure of several once conservative scholars (Price, and particularly Ehrman). After noting the very conservative undergraduate training of Ehrman (Moody and Wheaton), Evans argues that "rigid ideas about the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture underlie Ehrman's problem" (p. 27). To be fair, this is something that Ehrman states in his own work, but I simply cannot believe that there is no middle ground, a point that Evans makes as well. I mention this only to point out that I do not believe that the doctrine of inerrancy is the reason for Ehrman's falling away, and Evans's statements could be perceived as a veiled attack on the doctrine.

Evans's work would serve as a wonderful text for a class on the Gospels or the historical Jesus, or as supplemental reading for a NT course. With all of the skeptical literature making its way into mainstream bookstores, this well-written and easily understood work will be a welcome aid to the pastor who is being asked about "the Gospel of the week." The recommended reading list does a nice job of balancing scholarly with more popular titles. There are a few works that I would like to have seen

placed there, but that will always be the case when someone else is drawing up the list. This is a work that can be given to a genuinely interested skeptic, and you will not be embarrassed. Recommended.

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Matthew 1:1–11:1. By Jeffrey A. Gibbs. Concordia Commentary. St. Louis, MO: Concordia, 2006, xxxvi + 547 pp., \$42.99.

The editors' preface explains that the Concordia Commentary series is designed to be an aid for pastors, missionaries, and teachers of the Scriptures. With so much recent hermeneutical discussion on meaning residing—in whole or in part—with the reader of the text, I appreciated the statement that the goal of instruction of the Word is "faithfulness to the divine intent of the text" (p. xi). The editors also are careful to lay out the presuppositions that stand behind all the authors and editors of the Concordia series, presuppositions that are within the framework of Lutheran confessors who subscribe to the *Book of Confessions* (1580). As stated in the preface, the Concordia Publishing House is the publishing arm of the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church and as such is bound to doctrinal agreement with the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions. This theological confessional framework should give confidence in the series for those actively participating in the Missouri Synod Lutheran church and perhaps other Lutheran branches, but it also may give some level of caution to those not holding to these Lutheran confessions. The preface does state that authors and editors are not bound to every detail of Luther's exegesis (p. xiii).

The commentary's format is attractive and easy to follow. The introduction includes an evaluation of audience, structure, critical issues, themes, authorship, and date. One appreciates the author's own translation with exegetical notes. In fact the exegetical notes are one of the strengths of the commentary, since many commentaries on Matthew are neither long enough nor designed to handle so many exegetical details, even if one may not always agree with the analysis. Gibbs does commendable work interacting with the Greek NT and interjecting the Septuagint and Hebrew Masoretic text when appropriate. Following the notes is the expository commentary on the text. Icons highlighting different doctrinal and church themes are included in the margins. Footnotes in large part interact with other secondary literature on Matthew, including various well-chosen commentaries and grammars.

Gibbs leads off the introduction with an extensive discussion on Matthew's audience. He makes a good case that Matthew's Gospel, consistent with other ancient biographies, was not confined to a limited Christian community (i.e. "the Matthean community") but was directed to a broader audience of baptized Christians in the regions of Syria and Palestine (p. 4–5). Largely absent from the discussion is an evaluation of any evidence for a common view regarding the more specifically Jewish background of the audience. One of the more interesting aspects of the introduction is Gibb's extensive defense of Matthew's literary independence from the other Gospels based on the external evidence from the Church fathers and his own internal analysis of verbal agreements in the parallel passages between Matthew and Mark. While noting that any position on the Synoptic problem must be held humbly and tentatively, his conclusion based in part on the work of Bo Reicke is that similarities in wording for the Synoptics can be explained by "a combination of written tradition, some similar written materials, and the influence of the common teaching of the Jerusalem apostles" (p. 21). Also, since none of the various views of the Synoptic problem are "falsifiable," Gibbs

argues that no view should be used to the extent that it bears “any significant hermeneutical or exegetical weight” (p. 28). Rather, Matthew should be read and interpreted using a “narrative” approach. Gibbs argues that the primary structure of Matthew should be centered on a “three-part narrative outline” based on the work of Jack Kingsbury (1:1–4:16; 4:17–16:20; and 16:21–28) rather than on the five major discourses of Matthew. According to Gibbs, the problem with the discourse approach is that it minimizes the climax of the Gospel: Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (p. 39).

Gibbs points out three major themes in Matthew: reign of heaven/God in Jesus, fulfillment, and mission. He specifically argues that the phrase “kingdom of heaven/God” is better rendered “reign of heaven /God,” taking the phrase as a subjective genitive emphasizing “divine action” rather than place. Although many interpreters see both aspects of reign and realm in the Greek term *basileia*, Gibb’s point is well taken that the English term “kingdom” may just convey the idea of place for some (pp. 47–51). However, “kingdom” may still be a better translation option, since the term “reign” seems to neglect the other aspect of *basileia*’s semantic range and the genitive phrase “kingdom of God” may not be subjective. The theme of fulfillment in Matthew is seen in Jesus, since he is the “goal and objective” of God’s historical dealings with Israel, the fulfillment of OT typology and predictive prophecies, and the interpreter of the Scriptures (pp. 54–58). Regarding mission, Gibbs makes a point of emphasis that the focus of saving lost people is not merely found at the *end* of the Matthew’s Gospel but throughout the book (p. 55). Gibbs concludes the introduction with his reasons for the Gospel being written by Matthew in the mid-to-late 50s AD in Palestine.

A significant portion of the expositional/exegetical part of the commentary is devoted to the Sermon on the Mount (pp. 226–401). Using the work of Dale Allison, Gibbs sees a three-tiered structural organization of the Sermon in terms of blessing (the “doorway to the sermon,” 5:3–12); calling (“revelation for the disciples’ existence,” 5:13–12); and warning (“exit from the sermon,” 7:13–27; p. 231). In large part, Gibbs sees the Sermon as an explanation of the calling of the disciples to be salt and light (p. 232). However, the broader audience of the whole crowd is seen in the third-person references in the Beatitudes (5:3–10) and closing warning. Regarding the Sermon’s relationship to the Law, Gibbs argues for and emphasizes continuity with the OT. As he states it, “Jesus is expounding the true meaning of God’s OT commandments” (p. 277).

With only the first eleven chapters in Matthew completed in this volume, my initial assessment on the work is that many conservatives in the Lutheran or Reformed church camps will probably find much to like in this commentary, while dispensational interpreters and perhaps others will find some of the theological positions unsatisfying. However, regardless of one’s theological positions on matters of continuity/discontinuity, the nature or offer of the kingdom in relation to Israel, or the relationship of Jesus’ teaching to the OT, the commentary is a good resource for any serious student of Matthew who has some background in working with the Greek NT.

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The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered. By Paul N. Anderson. Library of New Testament Studies 321. London: T & T Clark, 2006, xx + 226 pp., \$120.00.

There has been a long-standing discussion in the world of biblical studies concerning the relationship between John’s Gospel and the Synoptic Gospels. In fact, the distinctive nature of the Gospel of John was even noted by the early Church fathers, with

Clement of Alexandria calling it a “spiritual” Gospel. The standing consensus now among modern critical scholarship is that John is the least historical of the four Gospels and should not be seriously considered when engaging in the quest for the historical Jesus. However, Paul Anderson’s recent volume, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus*, seeks to challenge this current consensus within biblical studies. He describes the dominant position as one committed to the “dehistoricization of John and the de-Johannification of Jesus” (p. 6). Although he is still committed to critical methodologies within modern scholarship, he thinks those same critical methodologies can challenge the current bias against John’s historicity.

The book is divided into four major sections and also a brief concluding section. In the first section of the book, Anderson takes the reader on a fascinating journey into the history of the John-Synoptic conflict, starting with Papias and the early church and moving all the way to scholars such as D. Moody Smith and R. Alan Culpepper in the modern period. For those not up to speed on the history of John-Synoptic research, Anderson presents a most worthwhile historical survey. In addition to this survey, Anderson uses this first section to lay out the varying scholarly positions on the relationship between John and the Synoptics and then offers a brief critique of each of them. It is here where we encounter the first of his many critiques against what he calls the “traditional” view, namely that John the apostle wrote the Gospel of John. An assessment of this critique will be offered below. In place of all the prior views, Anderson offers his own hypothesis about the origins of John’s Gospel, which includes the following: (1) John developed autonomously from the Synoptics and was not dependent upon them; (2) yet, at the same time, John was not isolated from the Synoptics and was written to both correct and augment them; and (3) John’s Gospel underwent several stages of development and appeared as an early edition (AD 80–85) and as a later edition (AD 100).

Having carefully reviewed prior work on the John-Synoptic relationship, in section 2 Anderson begins his extended critique of the modern scholarly consensus that John is ahistorical. He works through each of the “planks” in the critical platform and shows that the critical arguments are not as compelling as they might seem at first glance. For example, regarding the critique that John omits much of the Synoptic material, Anderson replies, “If the fourth evangelist were familiar with at least parts of Mark, it could be that parts were left out because of a desire to be complementary” (p. 50). Regarding the more developed and stylized language of John’s Gospel, Anderson replies that it is a fallacy to assume “that because John’s narration shows signs of later development, it cannot have represented anything historical about the events in Jesus’ ministry” (p. 67). Anderson proceeds to deal with objection after objection and shows that each one is lacking in many ways that are not commonly acknowledged by those in the critical camp. For those who hold the traditional view of John’s Gospel, this section of Anderson’s volume is a refreshing admission from a scholar who himself is committed to the critical method. However, what strikes the reader as odd here is that Anderson presents these arguments almost as if they were new discoveries when traditional scholars have known and used these responses to the critical method for generations. Moreover, after such a substantial critique of the errors of the critical method, one wonders why Anderson is so quick to dismiss the traditional conclusions concerning John. Ironically, it is those scholars in the so-called “traditional” camp who have championed these responses to Johannine critics in the first place.

In section 3, Anderson puts forth his own theory concerning the relationship between John and the Synoptics in greater detail. It is here that he develops his case that, although John is “autonomous” and not dependent upon the Synoptics, there is still substantial interaction between the traditions behind John and the Synoptic Gospels. Much of this interaction, argues Anderson, occurred at the oral stage of the

respective traditions and thus is visible later in the final product. In this section, he explores the relationship between John and Mark, John and Luke, John and Q, and John and Matthew. A core component of Anderson's thesis is that John's Gospel was formed in two editions (or stages). The first edition started with John 1:15, 19–42 and ended with 20:31, and the second edition added the prologue and the epilogue (and other smaller parts). However, the problem with this hypothesis is that it lacks any tangible historical evidence in its favor. The manuscript evidence for John's Gospel vastly favors the originality of the prologue and epilogue. Moreover, there have been studies of the prologue that show it is so intricately connected with the rest of the Gospel (on both linguistic and theological levels) that it is unlikely to have been added later by a redactor. As far as the epilogue is concerned, the recent book by Richard Bauckham (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006]) and the work of other scholars before him have shown that there is substantial evidence for the epilogue's originality to John's Gospel and that it should not be so quickly regarded as an editorial change. In the end, the reader begins to wonder whether the critical approach of Anderson, with the complexities of multiple editions and multiple redactors and with little tangible evidence to support it, is really superior to the traditional (and vastly more simple) view that the Gospel of John was written by the apostle bearing that name.

The fourth section of this volume explores the way that John offers a unique contribution, alongside of Mark (and thus the Synoptics as a whole), to the quest for the historical Jesus. Anderson argues for a "bi-optic" approach to the historical Jesus, drawing on both Mark/Synoptics and John, instead of Mark/Synoptics only. He begins with the events of Jesus' life that are contained in *both* streams of tradition and how they contribute to the historical Jesus, then looks next at those events just in the Synoptics, and finally (and most central to his thesis) examines the unique contributions that John makes to the historical Jesus. In regard to this last category, Anderson makes a positive contribution to the world of Johannine scholarship by pressing for a more serious reception of John as a historical Gospel—and again such a stance is both refreshing and welcome. However, as he makes his case for portions of John being historical, Anderson seems intent on demonstrating that these very portions stand in contradiction to the Synoptic accounts (particularly Mark). There seems to be little effort put towards finding a way that the Synoptics and John may complement or be harmonized with one another. For example, Anderson argues that the Last Supper in John's Gospel is more historically plausible because it was not a Passover meal, but a common meal, suggesting that John has a "primitivity and historical neutrality" not shared by the Synoptics (p. 170). However, simply because John omits the words of institution does not mean that the Last Supper in John was not a Passover meal—arguments from silence are not conclusive. Anderson himself has already argued that John's account is necessarily selective and that such selectivity can be driven by a desire to complement previous accounts known by the author. We already noted above that he said, "If the fourth evangelist were familiar with at least parts of Mark, it could be that parts were left out because of a desire to be complementary" (p. 50). Why, then, does Anderson not consider the possibility that John may be complementary to Mark in this instance? He also declared that "[arguments from silence] can only be tenuous, and by definition, they elude certainty" (p. 56). In light of such statements, one wonders how Anderson is so quick to insist on contradictions between John and the Synoptics, especially when (1) he is using arguments that he elsewhere admits are invalid; and (2) plausible solutions to the apparent contradictions are so readily available.

We are now at a point where we can return to one of the dominant themes throughout this volume. Although Anderson is keen to challenge the scholarly consensus that is critical of John, he is equally keen to remind his readers that he is no supporter of

the traditional view that the Gospel was written by John the apostle. The best summary of his argument against John the apostle as the author includes the following statements: (1) “The writer of John 21 claims *another* person is the author—the Beloved Disciple who leaned against the breast of Jesus at the supper” (p. 25). The problem with this statement is that Anderson never enters into an argument showing that the Beloved Disciple could *not* be the apostle John. Indeed, scholars have put forth many good reasons to consider the two individuals to be the same person. If Anderson’s concern here is with the “we” statement in 21:24, that too does not require the rejection of John as the author. Bauckham and others have argued that the “we” in 21:24 is simply a Johannine idiom known as the “we” of authoritative testimony” and serves simply to augment the authority of the writer (again, see *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses* 370–83). (2) “The ‘explanation’ of the death of the Beloved Disciple suggests apparently that he has died by the finalization of John” (p. 25). However, aside from making this claim, Anderson offers no exegetical analysis to support it. Why is it necessary for John the apostle to be dead already in order for chapter 21 to be written? If chapter 21 reflects an actual historical dialogue with Jesus, recorded by the eyewitness John, then there is no difficulty here. It is only if someone has a predisposition against the supernatural—in this case, that Jesus was a mere man and could not have predicted John’s death—that such a possibility could be entirely ruled out. And, if one has such a predisposition, then that predisposition itself needs a thorough defense; it cannot merely be asserted. (3) “John shows signs of editing, suggesting a redactor has indeed added his hand to the construction and/or finalization of John” (p. 25). It is clear that Anderson again is appealing to the fact that the prologue and epilogue of John were later additions. However, as we noted above, there is no textual or historical proof of such additions—it is simply conjecture on the part of Anderson. Moreover, there are good linguistic and thematic reasons for thinking these sections were originally part of John’s Gospel.

In the end, Anderson has offered an interesting volume which includes many valuable insights and a welcome challenge to the critical consensus in John-Synoptic studies. At many points, the book rightly exposes the manner in which much of critical scholarship can become so entrenched in its own orthodoxy that it fails to consider other alternatives that are on the table. However, that being said, Anderson’s own book, ironically, seems to suffer from the same problem. On the one hand, he is quick to point out logical inconsistencies and outdated arguments in the critical consensus, while on the other he retains logical inconsistencies and outdated arguments in his treatment of the traditional approach to John’s origins. It seems that Anderson is asking the reader to break out of a critical paradigm that he himself is still upholding. For that reason, it is difficult to find the book’s overall thesis compelling. That problem aside, this volume makes a positive contribution to the areas of John-Synoptic studies and should be read by all those interested in joining the dialogue.

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Navigating Paul: An Introduction to Key Theological Concepts. By Jouette M. Bassler. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, xii + 139 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Those engaged in the task of introducing students to the contours of Paul’s theology are painfully aware of the challenge—a challenge exacerbated by the lack of a concise and accurate summary of Paul’s thought. Jouette Bassler bravely attempts to fill this lacuna. However, Bassler makes it clear in the opening lines of the preface that

“this is not a book about Paul’s theology,” since she “is not at all certain that he had ‘a theology,’” by which she means “a reasonably well ordered and integrated set of beliefs” (p. i). Instead she offers a series of seven short chapters on key theological concepts to “orient the interested reader of Paul to the significance of these concepts and the contours of the debate” (p. i).

In the opening chapter (“Grace: Probing its Limits”), Bassler contends that Paul’s understanding of grace fits within the broad stream of first-century Judaism, while acknowledging that his more pessimistic anthropology brought his view of grace into sharper relief when compared to his Jewish contemporaries. Particularly noteworthy is the relationship between grace and suffering that Bassler highlights in Paul’s thought. In contrast to grace (at least in Romans and Galatians) Paul puts forth law. After exploring several ways of explaining the nature of this contrast, Bassler concludes that Paul opposes the use of the law to restrict divine favor to the Jews (thus following James Dunn).

The discussion of grace and law leads naturally into the second chapter (“Paul and the Jewish Law”). After briefly discussing Paul’s rejection of circumcision for Gentiles and the disputed phrase “works of the Law,” Bassler turns to the nature and function of the law in Paul. Bassler attempts to synthesize the various puzzle pieces from Galatians and Romans, although she despairs of extracting a “theology of law” from such “varied, . . . rhetorically charged, . . . situation dependent” letters (p. 17). Her conclusion is that Paul’s view of the law corresponds to Sanders’s covenantal nomism: (1) God initiates the covenant relationship by sending Christ; (2) humans remain in Christ by living in the Spirit (which accords with the righteousness described by the law); and (3) all will be judged by the law because it expresses God’s righteous character.

“Faith” is the subject of chapter 3. Note is made of the difficulty of translating *pistis/pisteuein* into English given its semantic range, but for Paul the most important element of the concept was that it was the “appropriate and saving response to the gospel” (p. 24). With respect to the Pauline contrast between faith and law, Bassler again agrees with Dunn that Paul objects to a misunderstanding of the law that divides Jew from Gentile through boundary markers. The remainder of the chapter surveys the “faith in Christ” versus “faith(fulness) of Christ” debate. Bassler opts for the latter, arguing that Christ’s faith becomes ours by imitation, identification, and mystical union with Christ.

Chapter 4 (“In Christ: Mystical Reality or Mere Metaphor?”) builds on the mystical union with Christ theme. After a brief summary of the debate over the nature and importance of the concept, Bassler surveys some of the Pauline phrases that constitute participation with Christ (Christ in you/me, in Christ/members of his body, baptized/crucified with Christ). The implications of these and other related mystical themes branch out into self-identity, ethics, and the nature of salvation itself. Although this mystical language is in tension with the juridical language also found in Paul, that tension is lessened when the participatory nature of faith is considered.

Chapter 5 tackles “The Righteousness of God.” Unlike previous chapters, little of the history of scholarship is mentioned (merely a paragraph on the exchange between Bultmann and Käsemann); instead, Bassler spends considerable space tracing the Jewish (OT and Second Temple literature) background of the concept. From this survey she defines it as “God’s readiness to do what is right and fitting” (p. 56). Bassler then explores how the concept is used in Romans, noting how Paul draws upon different aspects of the concept at key points in the letter. Drawing this data together, she concludes that for Paul “God’s righteousness is revealed in God’s constancy, consistency, dependability, trustworthiness, and faithfulness” (p. 65). The chapter concludes with an excursus on justification.

Few subjects are more disputed than Paul’s view of Israel; Bassler enters the fray in chapter 6 (“The Future of ‘Israel’: Who is Israel?”). She focuses the discussion on

“whether [Paul] thought that followers of Messiah Jesus had supplanted ‘Israel according to the flesh’—that is, Israel as an ethnic group—as the people of God”; and, if this is the case, “what future did Paul envision for the former ‘Israel’” (pp. 71–72). The following passages are examined: 1 Thess 2:14–16; Phil 3:2–3; 1 Corinthians 10; 2 Corinthians 3; Gal 4:21–31; 6:16; and Romans 9–11. Bassler offers three possible conclusions: (1) Israel refers to all believers (Jew and Gentile) and no longer to unbelieving Jews; (2) Israel refers to ethnic Israel, which will be saved through mass conversion to Christ; and (3) Israel refers to the descendants of Abraham, who will be saved based on their covenant with God. Bassler does not tip her hand, arguing that “the vague allusiveness of Paul’s language allows—indeed, almost requires—the presuppositions of the reader to take charge of the interpretation” (p. 84).

Fittingly, the last chapter addresses the last things (“Then Comes the End . . . : The Parousia and the Resurrection of the Dead”). Rather than treat the topic in a chronological manner, Bassler opts for a topical approach addressing: (1) resurrection at the parousia; (2) the naked soul; (3) to depart and be [immediately] with Christ; and (4) the cosmos and the parousia. According to Bassler, on these (and related) subjects, Paul is similar to his Jewish contemporaries in not articulating clear and consistent views; indeed, Paul may even show inconsistency or development.

Given her stated purpose (see above), Bassler has largely succeeded in writing a volume that is brief while at the same time exposing the reader to key themes in Paul’s letters. Of the themes explored, Bassler’s treatment of the righteousness of God is most satisfying since she avoids reducing the concept to “covenant faithfulness,” as some scholars have recently done. For the most part a representative sampling of the differing views on the concepts alerts the reader to the complexity of the scholarly discussion without bogging the reader down unnecessarily, though the use of endnotes placed at the back of the book makes it harder to follow the discussion into the secondary literature.

Unfortunately, the book has more substantive shortcomings than the use of endnotes. While she explicitly disavows any claim to being comprehensive, Bassler does assert that she selected the most essential topics for understanding Paul. In light of that, her omission of chapters on the Holy Spirit and the already/not-yet nature of Paul’s thought seem especially glaring. Additionally, Bassler’s conclusion that Paul lacked “a reasonably well ordered and integrated set of beliefs” calls into question how well she has understood Paul in the first place. No one denies that there are tensions in Paul’s thought as revealed in his letters, but to conclude that Paul lacked a coherent theology overstates the case. Perhaps part of the problem rests in limiting her scope to the so-called undisputed letters, though one might have suspected such a crucial methodological decision warrants explicit comment rather than a passing and indirect reference. Finally, there are places where Bassler’s focus shifts from what Paul thought on a topic to highly questionable contemporary reflections that Paul would have found mystifying. The most egregious example is her approval of John Barclay’s assertion that Paul’s “Christological exclusivism” can be deconstructed by “his pervasive appeal to the grace of God,” resulting in a Paul that can be mobilized in the service of relativistic multiculturalism (pp. 8–9).

Thus although this book has its merits, those searching for a concise and accurate introduction to Paul’s thought are best advised to keep looking. There remains a need for a *concise* introduction to Pauline theology that takes the *entire* Pauline corpus into account and incorporates the best insights of the New Perspective while avoiding its excesses. In the meantime, one is best advised to read Herman Ridderbos or Thomas Schreiner, or perhaps the relevant sections of the NT theologies by George Ladd or Frank Thielman.

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Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment. Edited by John M. G. Barclay and Simon J. Gathercole. Library of New Testament Studies 335. London: T & T Clark, 2006, x + 208 pp., \$130.00.

Divine and Human Agency in Paul and His Cultural Environment is a compilation from a colloquium held at the University of Aberdeen in 2004. The book offers a fresh examination of Paul's understanding of agency through a comparative approach to select Judean and Greco-Roman literary sources from around 200 BC to AD 200. It provides a contrapuntal reading of Paul within his cultural context that is both creative and informative. The need for this book, according to Barclay in the introduction, is based on the reemergence of the importance of agency within the "new perspective" and the postmodern turn that challenges scholars to reconceptualize their assumptions. It offers three models from which the various authors work in conceptualizing divine and human agency: (1) competitive in which both agencies are mutually exclusive; (2) kinship in which both are shared but transcendence is limited; and (3) "non-contrastive transcendence" in which God's sovereignty "grounds and enables human freedom" (p. 7).

The first three readings focus on early Judaism, and Paul's understanding of agency is peripheral. G. Boccaccini's "Inner-Jewish Debate" surveys the emphases of those within early Judaism: Zadokite emphasizing covenant; Enochic elevating the role of non-human agents; and sapiential seeing no clear link between divine and human agency. The next generation of Judaism continues the diversity of understanding concerning divine and human agency: the Sadducees seeking to restore balance; the Pharisees allowing for coexistence between the two agents; and the Qumran sectarians holding to a strong deterministic viewpoint. Early Christianity seeks to balance agency through the inclusion of the devil and Jesus, who is understood as divine wisdom, while Rabbinic Judaism reserves that place for Torah. Boccaccini's survey clearly demonstrates the diversity of approaches to maintaining the balance between divine and human agency within the family of Judaism. P. Alexander's "Predestination and Free Will" provides a cogent survey of agency within the Dead Sea Scrolls by providing an exposition of "The Sermon of the Two Spirits," with its dualistic and deterministic outlook, and convincingly argues for its centrality in the life of those living in Qumran. F. Avemarie's "Tension between God's Command and Israel's Obedience" wrestles with God's expectation of obedience from Israel and the various ways in which Rabbinic discussions understood the agency of the Torah in communal motivation. These discussions include humanity being modeled after the Torah, free will being necessary to allow for the possibility of punishment, and an evil inclination being the explanation for the struggle against God's commands. He also concludes that there was significant diversity concerning the role of human cooperation in obeying God's commands.

The next three readings discuss the cultural environment of Paul from both a Judean and Greco-Roman perspective and begin to narrow the focus of the book by considering their impact on Paul's writing. S. Westerholm's "Paul's Anthropological 'Pessimism' in its Jewish Context" assesses Jewish writings concerning the capacity of humankind to obey the commands of God. Overall, the texts surveyed hold out the distinct possibility that humans can obey the commands of God—quite unlike Paul's pessimistic view of humanity. F. Watson's "Constructing an Antithesis" provides a stimulating reading of 4QMMT, 4 Maccabees, and Paul in which the diversity of viewpoints concerning divine and human agency are attributed to the diversity within the hermeneutic approaches of each author. So, the Pauline antithesis between grace and works did not develop in an analogous way with that of 4QMMT and 4 Maccabees, but was in fact a construct of Paul. Watson argues that one cannot know the extent to which Paul's antithesis corroborates with or differs from other viewpoints held within Second Temple Judaism in that Paul's construct is more clearly defining his gospel rather than summarizing views of others contemporary to Paul. T. Engberg-Pedersen's

“Self-sufficiency and Power,” a dialogic reading of Epictetus and Paul, provides a study of the similarities and differences between Stoic and Pauline thought. He problematizes the distinction between divine and human agency and suggests that the interaction of humankind with the divine is a close approximation to current discussions of divine and human agency. He concludes, however, that in both Epictetus and Paul agency is intertwined and not to be understood in a binary relationship.

The final three readings provide the most direct interaction with Paul’s writings and his understanding of divine and human agency. J. Barclay’s “By the Grace of God I am what I am” provides a comparative reading of Philo and Paul concerning divine grace and human agency. Both authors emphasize the priority of grace, but there are some differences concerning its place in their theological framework. Philo associates it with creation while Paul connects it with the Christ-event, and for Philo a “resting sage” (p. 157) is the ideal person, while for Paul the ideal person is an obedient one. S. Gathercole’s “Sin in God’s Economy: Agencies in Romans 1 and 7” suggests Paul is arguing that God uses the history of sin for his divine revelatory purposes. In other words, the history of sin is the way in which God makes himself and his righteousness known. L. Martyn’s “Epilogue: An Essay in Pauline Meta-ethics” provides a brief sketch of the metaphysical, epistemological, semantic, and psychological components necessary for a complete meta-ethical theory, which he intends to develop further in an upcoming book. He summarizes and responds to key aspects of the preceding essays and offers brief remarks concerning an apocalyptic framework from which to understand Paul’s ethics. He argues for a corporate understanding of Paul’s ethics and for the idea that the new Spirit-led community is the new agent by which divine and human agents work together to overcome the “supra-human powers” (p. 178) warring against God.

This book’s strength rests in the mature reflection of seasoned scholars, who provide even-handed conclusions and avoid unnecessary speculation. The broad coverage of texts make this work a valuable addition to researchers working within Pauline studies, as well as theological studies within the fields of soteriology and theological anthropology. There are, however, a few weaknesses that need to be mentioned. Westerholm’s analysis has a distinctly pre-“new perspective” orientation to it, while Watson’s essay actually weakens the impact of other contributions within the book by pointing out the deficiencies of the comparative method because of the diversity of hermeneutic approaches employed by the various ancient authors, a perennial problem likewise noted by Barclay (p. 140). Gathercole’s contribution too quickly assumes the presence of a Jewish interlocutor in Romans 1–2, a viewpoint that has been called into question by both William S. Campbell and Robert Jewett. Also, it is not clear if this book was designed as a “call” to return to a pre-Sanders understanding of Paul or as a contribution to the research to move beyond the “new perspective” readings of Paul. That said, researchers from both sides of that debate will find material within this book both to embrace and critique. Pauline studies are enriched by this compilation of essays on divine and human agency.

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Early Patristic Readings of Romans. By Kathy L. Gaca and L. L. Welborn, eds. Romans through History and Cultures Series. New York: T & T Clark, 2005, vi + 237 pp., \$39.95.

In Christian history, few books have received acclaim and scrutiny like Paul’s letter to the Romans. From the outset it transformed early understandings of sin, salvation,

righteousness, and ethics, while shaping the larger emergent Western society as a whole. Patristic writers were seminal to this transformation, as they drew upon Romans to define Jewish disinheritance of the covenant, a philosophy of Christian Platonism, a theory of Christian *paideia*, and polemics against heretics and other religions. Almost two millennia later, the church cannot escape the influence of patristic figures who first interpreted the book. This collection of essays seeks to expose the foundations of receptions under our cherished didactic teachings from Romans.

This volume is the fourth of T & T Clark's Romans through History and Cultures Series, which emphasizes the place of various interpretations of Romans through the centuries. Based on an ongoing SBL seminar, the central focus of the study is to ask, "Why did we choose this interpretation rather than another one?" Even the book cover art highlights the interpretative framework of Scripture: a sketch of an individual studying the text at the center represents the reader's autonomous choice of a textual dimension; people joining hands around the individual represent the contextual frame shaped by relational networks; and a border with the classic face-to-face silhouette that doubles as a chalice, now with bread added beside it, represents the hermeneutical frame inspired by a certain religious perception of life. Too bad the hermeneutical principle of original authorial intention did not find its way regularly into the art or into the investigative priorities of the book's contributors.

This volume, featuring sixteen essays and responses, seeks to analyze the earliest receptions of Paul's Letter to the Romans, especially treating Clement of Alexandria, Irenaeus, and Origen on a few key passages primarily from chapters 1, 4, 8, and 9 through 11. Kathy Gaca and L. L. Welborn introduce the reason for the book: "the task of comprehending such early conception of Paul's teachings is challenging primarily because the interpretive thought world of the early Christians is remote, molten, largely oral and as such evanescent" (p. iii). Additionally, they claim that the readings and receptions of the patristic writers are often selective and allusive; these receptions need appreciation before assessing how they shaped the didactic prominence of Romans. Regrettably, the editors lay out no specific criteria for uncovering them.

Kathy Gaca posits that in Rom 1:18–32, Paul transfers the OT prophets' rebuke of covenantal Israel to the Gentiles who disobeyed similarly. In so doing, Paul portrays Gentiles as enlightened rebels rather than ignorant pagans, even though early patristic figures continued polemically to emphasize the Gentiles' ignorance and inability. Figures after Tatian finally emphasized the Gentiles' rejection of truth, and this perspective "produced a heady ideology conducive to helping reshape the Mediterranean region into a Christian society" (p. 25). They employed Romans 1 to forbid and outlaw any religious custom found integral to the category of apostasy. The advancing of this polemical position accompanied Paul's own growth in popularity.

Halvor Moxnes responds by distinguishing between an "imperial reading" and a "frontier reading" of this passage. The former approach assumes an audience and context with set ecclesial boundaries that did not exist in reality. The latter is preferred and necessary for understanding how Abraham in Romans 4 was an ambiguous appeal to both non-Christian Jews and Christian pagans. Moxnes's position is clearly contrary to an evangelical reading of Romans, as demonstrated by the following: "I do not suggest that this approach will solve all problems and make Paul's position on all issues morally acceptable" (p. 41). Unintentionally, he illustrates the book's goal of revealing how the context of one's own reading is an important variable in the text's reception.

Early Christian writers tended to read Romans 10–11 as a hostile rejection of the Jews' standing with God. Michael Joseph Brown explores the Jewish salvation according to Clement of Alexandria, claiming that Christianity did not displace Judaism in Clement's mind and that it "represents a divine attempt to overcome long established ethno-religious divisions" (p. 58). Respondent Kathy Gaca disagrees, not reading

Clement as supporting an inclusive vision but interpreting Paul as a typical patristic writer who necessitates the Christological tenet that Jews must be saved in Christ.

Working with *Stromateis* 2, Laurence Welborn argues four points: (1) Clement adopts Pauline ideas in Middle Platonist terms; (2) Clement writes with protreptic intent toward the adoption of a way of life; (3) Romans is a model invitation to the life of faith; and (4) Clement expositis an epistemology of faith in God “borrowed from Stoics and Epicureans, which designate its position on the road toward knowledge” (p. 79). While affirming much in response, Gaca questions the hortatory feature in *Stromateis* because Clement designed it to be inaccessible to the uninitiated.

Susan Graham identifies a current revolution in Irenaean studies that recognizes Paul’s positive contribution to the Church father rather than merely being a source for polemical quotes against Gnosticism. Centering on the olive branch metaphor, she explores Irenaeus’s development of the sons of Noah as sharing Pauline concerns about divine election, faith, righteousness, and salvation as depicted in Romans 9–11. Irenaeus sees these three matters and their inheritance as promises and analogies of the Gentile and Jewish response to the gospel. Calling him a “creative reader of Paul” (p. 109), Graham concludes that Irenaeus capitalizes on Paul’s ambiguity about Jewish salvation in Romans 11 because the Lyons bishop has the evangelism of Gentiles like the Celtic barbarians, rather than Paul’s Jewish remnant, in view.

Jeffrey Bingham explores resurrection and renovation in Irenaeus, who claimed that Gnostic heretics loved to argue against the application of redemption to the body or to creation. Bingham elucidates Irenaeus’s treatment of anthropology and cosmology according to which humanity will be renewed to its natural state and its original dominion in a new creation. Romans 8 is the center passage of Irenaeus’s intricately composed orthodox network of biblical passages (which includes 1 Corinthians 15). Such a network is needed because Gnostics improperly employ only select phrases from Paul’s writings. In his response, Christoph Marksches adds that, for Irenaeus, the divine power at the resurrection “is a central *theologoumenon* of Pauline theology” (p. 156).

Jouette Bassler uses Graham and Bingham to engage in her own probing of Irenaeus. Revealing his supposed exegetical weak spots and polemical presuppositions, she side-steps the revolution and accuses him of invoking the rule of faith against divergent interpretations: “The rule determines which Pauline texts are given voice and then tunes the selected texts to a single orthodox key” in a way that makes him “an intractable dialogue partner” (p. 139). Bassler is right that Irenaeus does not share her agenda for interpretive choices. Although she makes some interesting comparisons between Irenaeus and moderns like Käsemann and Dunn, she personally illustrates how polemics interfere when she suggests that Irenaeus’s understanding of Ham’s curse “contributes to the ignorance and fear that leads to the hatred and violence that has been revealed to us on September 11” (p. 148).

Emphasizing how Paul is an inheritance produced by centuries of synthesis, Ruth Clements explores Origen’s reading of Scripture in light of his Pauline-based notion of fleshly and spiritual Israel (1 Cor 10:18) in a way that disinherited the Jews as readers of Scripture. She argues persuasively that Origen was trying to rescue the OT from “Marcionite dismissal and Gnostic distortion” (p. 173). This essay, alongside Peter Gorday’s response, best demonstrates the reception of Pauline epistles in later Christian writers, in this case through the Alexandrian dualistic and Logos-centered hermeneutical method.

Sze-kar Wan makes a surprising yet fair case for a sensitive and historical Origen that esteemed Judaism when he wrote his early *Commentary on Romans*, perhaps due to Philonian influence or dialogue with contemporary Jewish exegetes. Origen’s Christocentrism never leads him to denigrate historical Judaism during this time period, and

he even defends it against heretics. Wan describes the early Origen as seeing church and synagogue “more like sibling rivalry than competing religious systems” (p. 193).

One of the most interesting essays is Charles Cosgrove’s formulation of hermeneutical assumptions clearly laid out in categories. He describes five premodern hermeneutical assumptions and corresponding hermeneutical imperatives for reading under them, Origen’s five hermeneutical principles that depend on the premodern assumptions, and five modern hermeneutical assumptions and corresponding hermeneutical imperatives for reading under them. This methodology allows Cosgrove to “build hermeneutical bridges to premodern interpreters like Origen without burning the bridges that connect [us] to modernity” (p. 204).

Dieter Georgi offers a disappointing conclusion as he analyzes Origen and Irenaeus on Romans. It is one-sided and unfair to say that “Irenaeus and Origen turned Paul upside down and robbed him of his identity, and also obscured the understanding of the first readers of the texts;” specifically, Georgi refers to their writings as “drastic revisions” and “outright burials” as “exegetes disown and kill Paul” (p. 212). He calls instead for exegesis that respects human rights and “passionate political engagement on behalf of human rights,” goals which have strayed far from both Romans and the essays of the book. Again, it seems a stretch to bring the polemical event of September 11 as a hermeneutical comparison for these patristic methodologies, and to parallel Christian martyrs and Islamic hijackings while reflecting on Romans.

This work is scholarly and extremely technical. It provides very thorough bibliographic and explanatory notes and certainly elucidates the few topics on which it focuses. However, it is unduly technical at times and some weak chapter conclusions clarify little. The work needs an overview of the patristic reception of the book of Romans that offers perspective for its essays; in this sense, then, the title is misleading. Furthermore, the book only analyzes three patristic writers, and then only on a few themes or passages. At times, contributors stray far from Romans into the larger Pauline corpus, and sometimes they detour from scriptural texts or patristic readings altogether. Thus, it only begins to reveal the hermeneutical foundation laid by the patristic interpreters.

Still, this book has much new material for scholars to consider and it puts us on the road to examining our choice of readings. For example, it is refreshing to see Graham branch into and limit herself to Irenaeus’s *Epideixis* as a text to explore his understanding of salvation history. Gaca’s survey of the historical use of Romans 1 is the type of phenomenological study that this book should generate. Despite some good issues that it explores, this work is recommendation-worthy only for a narrow audience of scholars.

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Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews. Edited by Herbert W. Bateman IV. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2007, 480 pp., \$29.99 paper.

The warning passages in the Epistle to the Hebrews have long challenged interpreters of every theological persuasion. Herbert Bateman has assembled four scholars to probe the theology of the warnings and to respond to those with whom they differ. The spirit of the interaction is respectful even as the disagreements are profound. Each chapter expounds the details of the text (with the Greek terms appearing in parentheses) and draws theological implications both from the immediate and distant contexts in the epistle. There is ample documentation from secondary sources for those who wish to read further.

Bateman provides an initial orientation by working through the five major warning passages (2:1–4; 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; 12:14–29). He observes the data and asks the interpretive questions that each scholar will need to address. He does a nice job of situating the warnings within the wider argument of the letter, with careful attention to the author's use of the OT. The chiasmic arrangement of the five warnings, with the hard-hitting admonition in 5:11–6:12 serving as the centerpiece of the chiasm, is plausible.

In the chapters that follow, the debate centers around three fundamental questions: (1) Do the spiritual experiences of those being warned (e.g. 6:4–5; 10:26, 29) depict regenerate Christians in the fullest sense of the term or threshold believers (quasi-Christians) who participate in many of the blessings of the community of faith but have never experienced regeneration? (2) What is the nature of the act of repudiation against which the addressees are being warned (2:1; 3:12; 6:6; 10:26; 12:14–16)? Is it decisive (and perhaps irrevocable) apostasy or is it an act of unfaithfulness that results in a permanent state of immaturity? (3) Does the judgment language (2:2; 3:11; 6:7–8; 10:27–31; 12:17) depict retributive judgment, that is, eternal separation from God? Or is one's eternal security assumed so that the threat concerns temporal discipline, such as premature death, grievous physical afflictions, or forfeiture of covenant blessings and rewards?

G. R. Osborne represents the "Classical Arminian" view. He begins by endorsing, with Calvinists, the doctrine of total depravity. Those warned are not quasi-Christians but regenerate believers, since it is "nearly impossible" (p. 112) to relegate the descriptions in 6:4–5 to a threshold experience. Believers are warned against full-scale apostasy—"a studied contempt and repudiation of everything the Godhead has done in salvation" (p. 121)—which is a real possibility and leads to loss of salvation. This is the unpardonable sin, which invites final, retributive judgment. The danger is real but avoidable, thus the words of encouragement that follow the warnings (6:9–12; 10:32–39). Calvinism and Arminianism (at least in their classical forms) both insist on abiding faith as the necessary prelude to final salvation and thus converge "in the realization that the elect will be known after they have persevered to the end" (p. 118). The three respondents raise a number of objections to Osborne's approach, the most serious of which may be framed with a series of questions: (1) Does the loss of salvation not contradict the promises of the eternal security of the believer, especially those in Hebrews, which ground security not in human maintenance but in God's faithful keeping (e.g. 7:25; 9:14–15; 10:14)? (2) Do the descriptive qualifiers in 6:4–5 and elsewhere demand complete regeneration or could the author be employing "phenomenological language" that portrays how these people appear as full participants in the community of faith, but whose apostasy proves their spurious spiritual state? (3) In light of the direct correspondence between the wilderness generation and the Hebrews' situation (esp. 3:7–4:11), is it not temporal inheritance rather than eternal salvation that is being forfeited?

B. Fanning expounds the "Classical Reformed" view. He readily admits that "a straightforward reading of the descriptions" of the spiritual state of those warned "refer to full and genuine Christian experience" (p. 180). However, this is later qualified to be phenomenological language that describes how those addressed appear to be, rather than actually are, fully regenerate. Their irrevocable apostasy is the decisive evidence that they are only threshold Christians, with the judgment that follows eternal. Why the warnings cannot mean what they "seem to say" (p. 205; i.e. regenerate people committing apostasy and suffering eternal judgment) is due to the numerous texts within the letter that underscore God's faithfulness to his people and the utter sufficiency of Christ's past cross-work and present intercession as the basis for Christian assurance (2:17–18; 6:9–20; 7:16, 25; 10:14, 32–39). For Fanning, such absolute prop-

ositions cannot be short-circuited by human infidelity. He supports his paradigm by drawing heavily on the conditional statements in 3:6, 14. The protasis and apodosis of these conditions are interpreted in an evidence-inference relationship rather than the standard cause-effect relationship. Fanning makes as good a case for the classical Reformed view as can be made, but questions remain: (1) Do not the numerous security texts in Hebrews (and the rest of the NT) presuppose faithfulness to Jesus as the necessary human response to the realization of such promises rather than guaranteeing certain perseverance for those who are regenerate? (2) Does not the severity of each admonition gather its force from the very fact that truly regenerate believers are being warned not to repudiate the exclusive basis of their salvation? By adjusting what the text seems to be saying to what it must be saying, does not the Reformed "system" end up "controlling the data" (p. 232)? (3) Can a paradigm for interpreting these five major warning passages, which are woven into the comprehensive argument of the letter, be built upon two conditional sentences that appear together in one early section (3:6, 14)?

G. L. Cockerill develops the "Wesleyan Arminian" view. There is no material difference between Cockerill and Osborne; perhaps two Arminian presentations were chosen to balance the two contrasting views labeled "Reformed." Cockerill and Osborne do disagree over the fate of the wilderness generation, the former arguing that the generation "faced eternal loss" (p. 271), while the latter sees physical death only as the result of the rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. Both agree, however, that in Hebrews the stakes are eternal salvation, not temporal discipline. The strength of Cockerill's presentation is his sensitivity to the pastoral implications of the warnings (pp. 291–92), a dimension easily overlooked in the debates over their precise theology. The questions asked of the Classical Arminian view (above) apply equally to the Wesleyan view.

Finally, R. Gleason argues for the "Moderate Reformed" view. I would object to labeling this view "Reformed," since it denies a dynamic view of perseverance (uniformly upheld by the Reformers), while upholding eternal security even for one who enters a permanent state of stagnation, or perhaps even repudiates Christ. It would be more accurately labeled a mediating perspective since it falls between Reformed and Arminian theology, setting up a two-tier dichotomy between one class of regenerate people who believe, obey, and inherit covenant blessing and equally regenerate people who believe, permanently disobey, and experience temporal (rather than eternal) judgment. Gleason draws direct trajectories from the OT experiences of wilderness Israel to the situation of the Hebrews: they were a redeemed people whose failure to reach the land signaled temporal not eternal judgment; the sin of that generation was not complete apostasy but failure to believe that God would sustain them in Canaan; and the promised "rest" was the fullness of covenantal blessing and the joy of God's presence, blessings distinct from salvation itself. Placing Hebrews in a pre-AD 70 Palestinian setting, Gleason sees the judgment language fulfilled, at least in part, in the destruction of Jerusalem and the cessation of the temple sacrifices. Even in 6:6; 10:26, 29, the harsh language describes not apostasy but a "decisive refusal to mature" (p. 354). The issues raised by the respondents are again framed as questions: (1) Can one draw a "one-to-one correspondence" between the OT and Hebrews as Gleason does? Given the OT background, does not the author of Hebrews see a pattern of escalation through *a fortiori* arguments that make the stakes much higher under the new covenant (2:2–3; 4:4–11; 10:29; 12:25)? Does Gleason not build his interpretive paradigm upon the OT and then force Hebrews into it, rather than starting with the climactic revelation in the NT (esp. the immediate context in Hebrews itself) toward which the adumbrations and typologies of the OT point? (2) Is there any substantive evidence for a Palestinian setting for Hebrews? Is it not at best unsupported conjecture to see the judgment language of the warnings fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem? (3) Does the language

of crucifying Christ again, subjecting him to an open shame, considering the blood of the covenant as unclean (6:6; 10:29) really address something short of apostasy, such as a refusal to mature or a fall into spiritual stagnation?

G. H. Guthrie writes a brilliant concluding chapter. He rightly praises the irenic manner of the exposition and the incisive yet generous responses of the four authors. He cautions against fitting Hebrews into a precise theological system, acknowledging that all sound theology must retain healthy “tensions” and maintain a posture of humility. These “tensions of the Biblicist” are beautifully illustrated in Charles Simeon’s interview of John Wesley. After their conversation, the Reformed Pastor of Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge concluded that he and the Arminian Wesley, despite their differences, were in substance in full agreement in “all that I hold (i.e. as a Calvinist), and as I hold it” (p. 445) with respect to salvation through Christ alone. This book is a fine example of how scholars can learn from one another, if they will make the effort to listen carefully to the other side.

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“Those Who Call Themselves Jews”: The Church and Judaism in the Apocalypse of John. By Philip L. Mayo. Princeton Theological Monograph Series. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006, x + 212 pp. \$24.00 paper.

The nature of Jewish-Christian relations is a delicate and important issue, especially in the religio-political atmosphere of our day. Those who study the Bible and Christian origins to find light on this issue commonly regard the period between AD 70 and 150 as a time of increasing divergence between the two communities. Granted that was the case, key questions arise: was this “parting of the ways” (to use James Dunn’s term) one of enmity only, or was it one of enmity mixed with love? Either way, what were the factors that led to the split? Interestingly, the sources to which we turn for answers to these questions are relatively few, mostly Christian, and sometimes puzzling. No doubt most of the NT and the writings of the Apostolic fathers at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century would be relevant to a wider study of these concerns. Of those documents, however, few are more germane than the Apocalypse of John (i.e. the book of Revelation), where we find a startling identification of “those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan” (Rev 2:9; see also 3:9). In light of such statements in John’s Apocalypse, Philip L. Mayo is convinced that this NT document deserves “to be given a greater voice in understanding Jewish-Christian relations during the sub-apostolic period” (p. 26) and thereafter. Therefore, Mayo offers us his study, urging that, at a minimum, John’s volume enlarges the pool of evidence relevant to the issue of Jewish-Christian relations and, at a maximum, it affords us new insights with which to address the issue.

To orient the reader to his concerns, Mayo opens his monograph with an introduction that places the Apocalypse’s publication in the period between AD 70 and 150, overviews recent scholarly treatment of the document in the context of Jewish-Christian relations, and sketches his study’s potential to shed light on those relations. Mayo then turns in chapter 1 to sketch the status of first-century Jewish-Christian relations (citing evidence from Christian and Jewish literature and archaeology) and to identify the major factors contributing to the schism that developed between the two groups (i.e. emerging Christian identity, Jewish persecution of Christians, and the Jewish Wars of AD 66–74 and 132–135). Against this backdrop, Mayo presents four chapters

(2 through 5) aimed at discerning how John utilized Jewish images and texts and applied them to the church. Mayo then concludes his monograph with a chapter that summarizes his major findings and commends his thesis that John displays a consistent and identifiable perspective concerning the relationship between the church and Judaism, a perspective that combines hope with woe. The focus of this review is the focus of the book: the historical and exegetical studies that make up chapters 2 through 5.

In chapter 2, Mayo examines the texts that give his book its title: Rev 2:9 and 3:9. The texts are linked by the use of similar condemnatory language and by contextual clues that point to threats from opposition groups. To assess what these texts tell us about relations between Christians and Jews in the first century, Mayo has first to answer the question, who are these opposition groups? He does this persuasively by dispensing with minority opinions that the “so-called Jews” are a (Judaizing) faction within the church and by reasserting the traditional opinion that John’s denunciations are directed at Jewish opponents. With this in mind, Mayo convincingly interprets John’s denunciations as a product of his redefinition of “God’s people” (and concomitantly of the “true Jews”), a redefinition in which spiritual truths transcend ethnic boundaries.

In chapter 3, Mayo analyzes the 144,000 in the visions of Rev 7:1–17 and 14:1–5, investigating the origin of the tribal list in 7:5–8, the purpose of the chapter 7 interlude, and the identity of the 144,000 in relation to the innumerable multitude in 7:9–17. As Mayo sees it, the tribal list (with its peculiarities) is John’s own creation, intended to connect his Asian audience to their Jewish spiritual heritage and their identity as God’s new spiritual Israel. Indeed, according to Mayo, John extends that connection by constructing the interlude so that the tribal list is juxtaposed with the vision of the innumerable multitude. This juxtaposition, says Mayo, assures John’s readers that their new identity not only distinguishes them as the ones whom God protects now, but it also distinguishes them as the ones whom God will reward in the eschaton. By so much, John underscores for his Christian audience that it is they who belong to God; it is they who are the true Israel, redeemed from all the nations by the Lamb. At every major point, Mayo’s opinions about the 144,000 are sensible.

The trajectory of Mayo’s second and third chapters continues in the fourth, where he takes up the interpretation of Rev 11:1–13 and 12:1–17. Focusing in succession on John’s visions of the temple, the two witnesses, and the heavenly woman, Mayo notes that each draws heavily on Jewish imagery and OT texts and that each conveys John’s message of preservation and vindication for Asian Christians faced with opposition. What, then, do these observations imply about John’s view of Jewish-Christian relations? Mayo’s argument is compelling: because John has conveyed his message precisely by applying to the church symbols that lie at the root of Israel’s identity as God’s people, the church must be, for John, God’s eschatological Israel.

Mayo’s fifth chapter covers Rev 21:1–22:5 and its vision of the New Jerusalem. After reviewing the vision’s structure and purpose, Mayo leads us through a fine discussion of each of its main segments (21:1–8; 21:9–27; 22:1–5). Helpfully noting John’s blending of three themes (new creation, New Jerusalem, and new tabernacle), Mayo emphasizes the fact that the details of his vision derive extensively from the Jewish Scriptures (especially Ezekiel 40–48), all to deliver to his Asian Christian audience his dual message of reward for the faithful and punishment for the unfaithful. Once again, Mayo asks the question, what do these phenomena in Rev 21:1–22:5 tell us about John’s perspective on Jewish-Christian relations? Again Mayo’s answer is convincing: the details of John’s vision of the New Jerusalem, especially when they are shown to apply Jewish images and texts in the light of Christian truths, reveal that he sees the church, the new covenant people of God, as God’s new spiritual Israel.

It is startling to modern eyes to read in a Christian document, much less in Holy Christian Scripture, of “those who call themselves Jews and are not, but are a synagogue

of Satan.” It may be even more startling to conclude, with Philip L. Mayo, that this same document should be given a greater voice in understanding and addressing Jewish-Christian relations. Yet that is precisely the conclusion one reaches after reading Mayo’s study of the Apocalypse of John. This is not to say that all readers, particularly Christian Zionists, will find all his arguments persuasive. It is rather to say that Mayo will show charitable readers how it is possible for John to denounce false claimants to the title “Jew” and to reserve the title “true Jew” for Christians without veering into a theology of replacement, abandonment, or racism. To be sure, Mayo’s study would be stronger if he had shown how John’s perspective is consistent with that of the OT authors and the rest of the NT authors. One also wonders how his conclusions would be affected if he were to date the Apocalypse before AD 70 or were to treat it as one part of a diptych with the Gospel of John. Even so, Mayo’s monograph admirably accomplishes his goal: the Apocalypse of John did speak with a loud and clear voice on the issue of Jewish-Christian relations in its ancient setting. That voice can and needs to be heard in our contemporary setting as well.

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Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary. Vol. 10: *Against Apion*. By John M. G. Barclay. Leiden: Brill, 2007, lxxi + 430 pp., \$199.00.

This book represents a significant scholarly achievement. The richly detailed commentary is the first on *Against Apion* ever to appear in English. The translation is based upon a new critical edition of the Greek text, the first in more than a century. The sophisticated analysis of the cultural, historical, and rhetorical aspects of *Against Apion* heralds a growing vibrancy in Josephus studies after years of near-somnolence.

There is an enigmatic quality about Josephus. Born to an aristocratic Jewish family, he spent a good portion of his life in Rome enjoying the favor of the Flavian emperors. A general on the Jewish side in the war of AD 66–70, he became something of a quisling after his capture, serving as an interpreter for the Romans during the siege of Jerusalem. Despised by many Jews, he labored to defend the Jewish cause before the Romans, even while posing as a pro-Roman propagandist. Proud of his skill as an historian, he smarted under the charge that his field of study was unworthy. His four works, *Jewish War*, *Antiquities of the Jews*, *Against Apion*, and *Life*, are varied in tone and at points appear to contradict each other. Perhaps the most important literary figure of the Flavian age, only two or three other Roman authors seem to know of him. For centuries Josephus was valued not for any reason that met his own design but as a source for information about Jesus and other features of pious NT interpretation. By late antiquity his reputation enjoyed a rising tide. In the half-century before Luther some twenty Latin printings of his works were published. His fortunes began to ebb in the early modern period, and the last two centuries have not been kind to Josephus. The most recent German translation of his *Antiquities* is a century old, and the figure is twice that for the Italian. Parts of the regal Loeb translation at seven decades are similarly long in the tooth. Three Greek editions date from the last years of the nineteenth century, and only the 1889 Niese long survived. The tide began to turn again some twenty years ago, as a spate of dissertations and several edited volumes of high quality have appeared, most seeking to lodge Josephus within the context of classical and in particular Flavian studies. Since 1996 the Münster Josephus project led by F. Siegert and H. Schrechenberg has labored to produce a new critical edition of the works of Josephus, and Barclay’s translation is based upon the work of the Münster team. The volume

under review is part of the International English Josephus project, an ambitious endeavor launched by and under the direction of Steve Mason.

Josephus wrote *Against Apion* to combat an anti-Jewish tract written years earlier by the Roman grammarian Apion. During the early years of the first century riots broke out in Alexandria as a result of the attempt by Alexandrian Jews to gain increased rights from the Emperor Caligula. Claudius put a stop to the unrest when he issued stinging rebukes to both sides. Apion had stitched together slanderous claims about the Jews put forward by earlier authors, including the charge that the Jews were descendants of a group of leprosy-ridden Egyptian slaves who practiced human sacrifice and the worship of animals.

Josephus, Barclay maintains, had an unenviable task in *Against Apion*. Anti-Jewish feeling in Rome was high in the aftermath of the war. The Flavians fanned these flames by tapping into the rich tradition of Roman imperial sensibilities, a pastiche of attitudes headed by xenophobia and the presumption of cultural superiority. In such a climate the recycled charges put forward by Apion found a ready target. Barclay places Josephus within this Roman context, first by deftly illumining the complex socio-cultural landscape in which Josephus operated and second by examining the rhetorical strategies Josephus pressed into service. To make his case, Barclay employs postcolonial theory, which he defines as "the products and strategies of the subordinate parties in relations of unequal cultural power" (p. lxix). Josephus played alternately upon the prejudice and admiration the Romans felt toward the East in general and the Egyptians in particular. He sought to persuade Romans that the Jews were not enemies but rather, in contradistinction to other peoples from the East, suitable as cultural allies. This is an audacious enterprise. How does Barclay see this playing itself out?

Barclay reckons Josephus's challenge was twofold. Against the charges made by Apion he needed, first, to demonstrate the antiquity of the Jews and, second, that Jews are distinct from and culturally superior to the Egyptians. He praises the antiquity of Egyptian records and draws a parallel to the Hebrew Scriptures. He notes with approval Greek testimonies to the antiquity of the Jews, even while pointing out that in its uncritical acceptance of myth, Greek historiography is inferior to his own practice and to the trustworthiness of Jewish traditions. He anticipates the modern perspectival debate by blandly observing that Greek history would be different if told from a Jewish perspective. While acknowledging that the idea of a "constitution" is foreign to his own cultural tradition, he nonetheless argues the Hebrew Scriptures contain one that is superior to Greek examples. Josephus accomplished the second aim by pointing to elements of Egyptian culture that the Romans found disturbing. As Barclay has noted elsewhere, Vergil's *Aeneid* presents Octavian's victory at Actium as the salvation of the state, the triumph of Roman civilization over Eastern barbarism, of sober Roman religion over Egyptian irrationality. Like Vergil, Josephus shows the Egyptians as practitioners of animal worship and given to overblown rhetoric, all evidence that Egyptian claims cannot be trusted. The implication is that their charges against the Judeans are baseless. The result, in Barclay's view, is a rhetorical *tour de force*.

Barclay is among the most skilled of contemporary Josephus scholars. For this project he enjoyed the advice of Erich Gruen, the Berkeley historian. One could hardly hope for a more knowledgeable or helpful guide. Unlike many ancient historians, Gruen has labored to understand religion as such and ancient religion in particular. In addition to Gruen, Barclay drew upon the experience of Mason, the general editor of this admirable series. Mason has established himself as one of the premier Josephus scholars of his generation, and his influence is obvious, particularly at those points where Barclay disagrees with him.

This is a fine book, deeply learned and yet accessible. It represents the emergence of Josephus studies as part of the classical curriculum, reminding us that Josephus is

more than a one-dimensional storeroom of antiquarian curiosities to provide a textured background to the NT. Along the way a good deal is to be learned, as *Against Apion* illumines, for example, the world of Roman anti-Christian attitudes as part of the broader canvas of anti-Jewish prejudice, as well as providing clues regarding the matter of Jewish proselytizing.

The introduction is thorough and illuminating, touching on such a bewildering array of scholarly approaches that one can perceive a future for Josephus studies that is every bit as complex as the current state of scholarly work on the NT. The indices on Greek and Latin terms, ancient names and texts, as well as modern scholars are all welcome. The bibliography is similarly first-rate. We owe to J. M. G. Barclay our thanks.

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Thomas: The Other Gospel. By Nicholas Perrin. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007, xii + 160 pp., \$19.95 paper.

Nicholas Perrin is Associate Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College and the author of *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2002). In this more recent treatment of the Gospel of Thomas, Perrin seeks to update scholars and interested laypersons on the current discussions of Thomas and to challenge once again the “unsettling homogeneity within Thomas scholarship” regarding the origin of the Gospel and the date of its original composition.

Perrin correctly observes that the single most important question surrounding Thomas is the original date of composition. The latest possible date is established by references to the document by Hippolytus of Rome (210–230) and Origen (c. 233). The earliest possible date is vigorously debated. Various scholars have convincingly demonstrated that some of the logia derive from the second century (logia 7 and 102) or even late second century (logion 44). Perrin admits though that other portions of the Gospel may predate these sayings and that these sayings were possibly inserted in the Gospel long after the original edition was penned. He summarizes the consensus views regarding provenance, original language, and views regarding the milieu of the document: the Gospel was composed in Syrian Edessa, first in Greek and then later translated into Coptic, and was influenced by Gnosticism. He briefly mentions the important debate over the relationship of Thomas to the canonical Gospels in which some influential scholars have claimed that Thomas was independent of the Synoptics and contains the earliest and most authentic Jesus tradition. He also notes that two influential scholars have argued that John was written in response to claims in Thomas.

Perrin then examines the views of Thomas espoused by Stephen J. Patterson, Elaine Pagels, and April D. DeConick. He provides both a summary of the contribution of each of these scholars to the study of Thomas and critiques their hypotheses. Unfortunately, space does not allow for a treatment of his interaction with these scholars. After reviewing and critiquing the contributions of these three influential scholars, Perrin then blazes his own trail.

First, Perrin summarizes the arguments from his 2002 volume *Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron* and several important journal articles that he has since published. He also offers new evidence that make his theories even more persuasive. Perrin argues that the Gospel of Thomas was first composed not in Greek, as is often assumed, but in Syriac. He supports this claim

with seven major arguments: (1) this best fits with the almost universally accepted Edesseean provenance of the document; (2) the number of catchwords in a reconstructed Greek Thomas do not exceed those in the Coptic translation; (3) there are as many catchwords in a reconstructed Syriac Thomas as in the Greek and Coptic recensions combined; (4) there are seven textual differences between the Greek and Coptic texts that can be persuasively explained as the result of shared dependence on a Syriac original; (5) several differences between Thomas and the canonical Gospels are easily explained as Thomasine efforts to introduce new Syriac catchwords in the order of Thomas; (6) several of the word pairings that occur in a Syriac Thomas also appear in the second-century Syriac *Odes of Solomon*; and (7) certain Thomas word pairings in Syriac recur elsewhere in Thomas.

He also argues that Thomas's most likely source was Tatian's *Diatessaron*. Perrin notes that the consistency of the catchword pattern suggests that Thomas was not a "slowly snowballing oral collection" (p. 93). The complexity of the catchword associations implies that the author was a determined editor and not merely a compiler of stray oral traditions. Perrin points out that Thomas bears uncanny resemblances to Tatian's *Diatessaron*. While the order of Thomas parallels the Synoptics at eight points, the order of Thomas parallels the *Diatessaron* at nine. Many of the differences in wording between the Synoptics and Thomas were shared by the *Diatessaron*. Logion 86 is an example in which both Thomas and the *Diatessaron* frequently deviate from the Synoptics, and yet both perfectly match each other. Furthermore, both Thomas and Tatian share the same commitment to asceticism. Both express commitments to poverty, vegetarianism, and sexual abstinence. Perrin suggests that Tatian's commitment to asceticism was influenced by his mentor Justin Martyr, who was himself influenced by Philo of Alexandria. Although these similarities might be explained by the hypothesis that the *Diatessaron* was dependent on Thomas, Perrin defends his conviction that Thomas depended instead on the *Diatessaron* because this direction of influence makes the most sense of the mix of influences on ascetic Syriac Christianity. He writes, "Thomas-style asceticism finds its point of origin at the confluence of two rivers: second-century Syriac ascetical practices undertaken in a broad religious milieu, and Philonic Encratism, as it was mediated through Justin Martyr and Tatian" (p. 106).

Perrin argues that logion 13 is evidence of a conflict between the Thomas community and proto-Palutians, a proto-orthodox community in Edessa that utilized the four Gospels now contained in the NT. This saying situates the composition of Thomas in the late second-century when the four-fold Gospel collection was widely accepted. The Gospel of Thomas was written in reaction to the Christology and soteriology of the proto-orthodox church. Against proto-orthodoxy, the Thomas community denied Jesus' unique deity and insisted that Thomas (and those who embraced his teaching) were equal to Jesus. Salvation was not forgiveness of sins through belief in Jesus but was in essence "returning to one's true self as it was found in Adam" (p. 120). This salvation was acquired by successful imitation of Jesus in which one became, like Thomas Didymus (the Twin), Jesus' twin.

Perrin's earlier work demonstrated the plausibility of his claims that Syriac was the original language of composition of the Gospel of Thomas, and his new treatment of the Edesseean provenance of the Gospel significantly strengthens that case. Perrin's earlier work also argued that the Gospel of Thomas was dependent on Tatian's *Diatessaron*. This latter thesis was not sufficiently developed to present a compelling case. This present work makes up for some of the gaps in Perrin's first treatise. His arguments for Tatian's influence on Thomas are rigorous, judicious, and shift the burden of proof to those who insist that the Gospel of Thomas was composed in the first century and contained Jesus traditions that are independent of and superior to the NT Gospels.

Those who have read extensively in the field of current Thomas scholarship will likely see some weaknesses in Perrin's arguments. The most compelling argument for a Syriac original of Thomas is based on the number of catchwords in the reconstructed Syriac text as compared to the reconstructed Greek text and the extant Coptic text. However, comparison of two reconstructed texts is necessarily subjective. Some scholars have challenged elements of Perrin's reconstructed Syriac text. Their criticisms may require a reduction in the number of catchwords. However, even after one eliminates certain catchwords as forced to support the hypothesis, the number of accepted catchwords still seems high enough to support a Syriac original. One wishes that Perrin had interacted more extensively with these scholarly critiques of his earlier work.

Furthermore, some of Perrin's arguments regarding the theology of Thomas, as well as probable influences on the author and his community, do not appear to be sufficiently sensitive to the significant theological differences between the Greek and Coptic recensions of Thomas. For example, the Greek fragment of logion 5 appears to affirm the concept of bodily resurrection, but Coptic Thomas redacts the apparently earlier recension in order to eliminate the affirmation of bodily resurrection in keeping with its own dualistic tendencies. This seems to suggest that, as Thomas was utilized by various communities, they adapted it for their own purposes and these adaptations do not necessarily reflect the theology of the original author. Thus one cannot automatically assume that the theology of the Coptic text is evidence for the original author's milieu.

Despite these reservations, Perrin's explanation of the origin and background of the Gospel of Thomas is the most sensible hypothesis that has been proposed to date. Perrin's theories demand the attention of all Thomasine scholars and have the potential to bring about a paradigm shift in the field of Thomasine studies. Perrin's groundbreaking work is essential reading for those engaged in Gospel study and historical Jesus research.

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Constantine's Bible: Politics and the Making of the New Testament. By David L. Dungan. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007, xii + 224 pp., \$17.00 paper.

In the opening chapter, Dungan, Professor of Religion at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, defines the concept of "canon." He strongly objects to the use of the terms "canon" and "Scripture" as synonyms. According to Dungan, the difference between the terms lies primarily in the phenomena of boundaries and enforcement. The term "Scripture" refers to the slowly evolving conglomeration of sacred texts used by a religious community over hundreds or thousands of years. A "canon" of Scripture is a collection of sacred writings with clearly identifiable boundaries whose authority is enforced by the leaders of the community. Dungan asserts that only in Rabbinic Judaism, orthodox Christianity, and Islam do we have canons of Scripture.

In chapter 2, Dungan sheds more light on the meaning of "canon" (Gk.: *kanōn*) by situating it in its Hellenistic legal context. *Akanōn* was a carpenter's rule, which Greek intellectuals used metaphorically to refer to the standard set by the laws of the city-state. Dungan claims that it was in the context of the ancient Greek democratic experiment (from the seventh to the fifth century BC) that the trend toward greater order, stability, clarity, and precision developed. Thanks to the work of the philosophers, this trend toward greater mathematically based precision was extended beyond the realm of law and government and manifested itself in the areas of music, art, architecture,

engineering, rhetoric, metaphysics, and ethics. This cultural revolution was introduced to the entire Mediterranean world—including Israel and the areas of the Diaspora—in the fourth century through the conquests of Alexander the Great.

Dungan's attribution of the emphasis on precision during this time to the rise and development of ancient Greek democracy is intriguing and, on the surface, plausible. There are a couple of problems with the claim, however. First, he asserts the connection without providing the reader with evidence beyond mere historical proximity. Further, he seems to imply that Plato was a proponent of the new democratic approach to government, something that few philosophers would affirm. While Plato rejected traditional forms of monarchy, he was also highly skeptical of the common person's ability to cast a wise vote. This chapter is foundational for Dungan's thesis, and because of this its brevity is disappointing. Further development of the essential claim is needed here.

In chapter 3, Dungan addresses the influence of Hellenism on Second Temple Judaism and early Christianity. He claims that the submission of the Judean leaders to Alexander the Great in 331 BC caused Greek "*polis* ideology" and philosophy to take up residence in Jerusalem (p. 21). After briefly addressing Pharisaism, he begins a discussion of the influence of Hellenism—with its emphasis on precision—on early Christianity. Dungan is convinced of the significance of the term *ekklesia* as a designation for the church, noting the meaning of the word in its Hellenistic context. It was the "name of the popular assembly in a Greek *polis* responsible for all decisions of internal or external policy" (p. 22). Like those responsible for bringing order to the potential chaos of Greek democracy, the Christian *ekklesia* had to deal with the real possibility of disorder given the diverse backgrounds of those who were converting to Christianity (i.e. Jewish and Gentile).

Dungan then documents what he calls the "impulses toward greater order and standardization" (p. 23) in the church from the first through the third centuries. He quotes from Paul, the Pastoral Epistles (which he regards as pseudonymous), *I Clement*, and the writings of Ignatius of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen to show the concern for faithful adherence to orthodox Christian tradition as interpreted by the bishops and elders of the apostolic churches. All of these leaders urged their readers to obey those whose job it was to interpret and apply the tradition. They often used the word *kanōn* to describe the tradition as the standard of faith and practice in the church (e.g. the "rule of faith").

However, no writer during this period (pre-fourth century) uses *kanōn* to describe an official list of scriptural books, something which Dungan finds surprising and highly significant. In making this claim, Dungan is in line with other canon scholars. The reference to Scripture as canon does appear to be a fourth-century development. He suggests that this is the case because no church council had met to determine such a list of officially sanctioned texts. Such an interpretation demands a defense, and the reader must wait until later in the book to encounter one.

In chapter 4, Dungan continues to develop his claim that the Greek emphasis on precision, inspired by the rise of democracy, significantly influenced the development of early Christianity and its biblical canon. He notes the widespread custom in antiquity of composing anonymous and pseudonymous works, and he documents the new emphasis on identifying authors of works in the writings of Callimachus of Cyrene (third cent. BC), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (first cent. BC), Galen of Pergamum (second cent. AD), and Diogenes Laertius (third cent. AD). Dungan focuses on Diogenes's *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers*, noting the concern that the author shows for identifying the authentic writings of the philosophers, the legitimate successors of the various philosophical schools, and the most reliable manuscripts of the authentic works.

Dungan then gives a very basic overview of the development of the Christian collection of Scriptures during the second and third centuries, showing parallels with

Greek philosophy at a number of points. Church fathers like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen showed concern for the authorship of Christian scriptural texts, for legitimate episcopal succession from the apostles to their own day as a way to establish the correct interpretation of Christ's teaching, and for textual criticism as a way to identify the most accurate copies of the authentic, apostolic texts. Dungan identifies two particularly significant phenomena in the work of Origen. First, he was concerned with accuracy and precision. Second, he was content with ambiguity where certainty was not possible. An example of the latter is Origen's identification of 2 Peter, 2 John, and 3 John as scripturally "doubtful." Some in the church supported their authenticity (i.e. as apostolic in authorship), and others did not. Origen essentially concluded that the church in his day could not determine the authorship of these small epistles, and he did not seem troubled by it.

Dungan's work here is compelling. His treatment of the development of the NT collection during these centuries is compatible with the consensus among canon scholars, and the parallels that he establishes between pagan and Christian scholars is convincing. This chapter helps the reader to interpret the widespread practice of constructing anonymous and pseudonymous writings in antiquity (although more elaboration here would be helpful), as well as the counter-concern for authenticity and precision found among the intellectuals.

In chapter 5, Dungan focuses on the work of the church historian Eusebius. Applying the same methodology as the orthodox Fathers before him—but with more rigor and depth—Eusebius documented the process of Scripture recognition that had been taking place for almost 200 years up to his day in the early fourth century. He documents the succession of bishops in the churches of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem to the best of his ability based on the sources available to him. Applying the criteria of theological orthodoxy, apostolic authorship (understood as authorship by an apostle or an associate of an apostle), and ecclesiastical use (in worship and scholarship), Eusebius specified which Christian writings were regarded as Scripture and which were not. He divided the "candidates" for scriptural status into three or four groups, depending on how one interprets his treatment of the categories. Dungan makes a case for three, with the second of the three divided into two subgroups. Those groups were "genuine" or "acknowledged" (i.e. those that had overwhelming support in the historic, orthodox church), "disputed" (i.e. those lacking overwhelming support), and "rejected" (i.e. those considered heretical). The genuine, undisputed writings totaled 20 and included the four Gospels, Acts, the Pauline Epistles (excluding Hebrews), 1 Peter, and 1 John. The first group of disputed writings—described by Eusebius as "known and approved by many"—had substantial, but not overwhelming, support in the church. These were Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 John, 3 John, and Jude. The other group of disputed writings Eusebius calls "spurious." By this, he apparently means that they were orthodox in content but not written by an apostle or an associate of an apostle, according to the consensus of the orthodox church. These included the Shepherd of Hermas and the Epistle of Barnabas, among others. The rejected writings were those composed by persons regarded as heretics by Eusebius and his orthodox predecessors and included writings such as the Gospel of Thomas and the Acts of John.

Dungan notes the willingness of Eusebius to leave the question of the disputed writings open-ended, like "the good philosopher [that] he was" (p. 92), and generally gives Eusebius high marks for the work that he did. He also identifies criteria that Christian leaders did *not* use in the selection process, an observation worth noting. These included casting lots (a biblical phenomenon), dreams, visions, or voices from heaven (both biblical and operative in the patristic church), inspiration, and martyrdom. With regard to the latter two, Dungan demonstrates that virtually every group claiming to be authentically Christian in the early centuries of the church claimed inspiration for

their writings and could provide an impressive list of martyrs. The orthodox had to demonstrate *historical* connectedness to Christ through the apostles to distinguish themselves among the claimants of authentic Christianity.

In chapter 6, Dungan documents and interprets the impact of Constantine's conversion to Christianity on the spirit, theology, and biblical canon of the orthodox church. Not only did Constantine make restitution to the Christians for the damages done during the persecutions of the early fourth century, he went far beyond anything that anyone could have imagined by promoting the faith using the power and resources of the state. For example, Constantine financed the building of Christian basilicas, put clergy on the state payroll, and gave Miltiades, bishop of Rome, "a sumptuous villa" on the eastern edge of the city, a gift that the bishop accepted (p. 103).

Constantine also began persecuting unorthodox Christians (with the blessing of the orthodox) through intimidation and exile and ordered that their sacred writings be confiscated and destroyed. He also regularly intervened in ecclesiastical affairs. Constantine clearly saw Christianity as a way to unite the Roman Empire, and theological disputes within the church made him nervous for political reasons. When the Arian controversy became well known, Constantine insisted that the bishops settle the issue as promptly as possible. When they failed to do so, the emperor convened the Council of Nicea (AD 325), again insisting that the church come to a consensus on the question of Christ's relationship to the Father. The Arians lost the debate, and those who refused to sign the Nicene Creed were exiled. Dungan laments the loss of diversity and the persecution that followed in the wake of the council.

After the Council of Nicea, Constantine instructed Eusebius to produce 50 Bibles for the churches of Constantinople. While the evidence is all circumstantial, it appears to support the consensus among canon scholars (including the implied view of Dungan) that Eusebius made the decision to include the first group of disputed works in those copies. From this point on, the term "canon," with its legal implications, was applied to these Scriptures, and there was little debate about the boundaries of the NT. Dungan suggests that the emperor and bishops of the orthodox church promoted the list of 27 NT books with the force of law, and, although the evidence is indirect, he makes a compelling case for the probability of such a change at the end of the canonical process.

In his final chapter, Dungan gives us some "food for thought" and suggests avenues for further reflection and research. Most significantly, he comments on some post-patristic developments, including the statements of Martin Luther on the boundaries of the canon and the influence of Enlightenment thinkers on modern attitudes toward Christian Scripture. Dungan claims that with Luther's demotion of Hebrews, James, and Revelation to the status of non-canonical, "the straightjacket of canon was torn off Christian Scripture, and a prodigious religious vitality began to flow through Europe once again" (p. 136). However, he also suggests that the Enlightenment reaction against all revealed religion (including the Bible) was too "broad and sweeping" (p. 138) and suggests a return to the pre-Constantinian approach to Christian Scripture, one that refuses to draw clear boundaries around this collection of sacred texts.

Dungan has given us an excellent read. His approach is balanced and fair, and he challenges modern Christians—especially evangelicals—to think about one of the more neglected aspects of bibliology. Evangelicals have invested much intellectual energy in theories of inspiration and principles of interpretation but have done comparatively little work on the historical development of the biblical canon. I highly recommend Dungan's work as a corrective to this oversight.

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Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal. By Eric L. Johnson. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007, 716 pp., \$35.00.

Spanning over 700 intriguing pages, Eric L. Johnson's foundation for a Christian psychology (CP) is a major contribution to soul care ministry that must be taken seriously. When "Christian psychology" was posed as a distinctive term two decades ago by philosopher C. Stephen Evans, it left a significant impression. Evans defined the phrase in reference to a comprehensive psychological endeavor "done to further the kingdom of God, carried out by the citizens of that kingdom, and whose work as psychologists is informed and illuminated by Christian character, convictions, and understanding" (C. S. Evans, *Wisdom and Humanness in Psychology: Prospects for a Christian Approach* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989] 132). His prophetic challenge had an impact. A generation of psychology students and dedicated professionals with evangelical convictions were forced to grapple with its mighty implications. It should be noted that Evans's quote is pulled from a chapter titled "Christian Psychology: *The Impossible Dream*." Thus, while there is no doubt that Evans was earnest about the inspirational purpose of this charge, attainment was cast as a lofty, glorious quest "to reach an unreachable star" (J. Darion, lyrics to "The Impossible Dream," from the Broadway musical *Man of LaMancha* [1972]).

The controversial phrase has been given limited attention in academic publications and conferences (e.g. R. C. Roberts and M. R. Talbot, eds., *Limning the Psyche: Explorations in Christian Psychology* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997]). It was not fully associated with a distinct model to manage the intersection of theology and psychology until philosopher Robert C. Roberts was identified as its spokesman in *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2001). Johnson was co-editor of that work and has long promoted a position consistent with CP through numerous journal publications and presentations. Now he has laid out a manifesto that depicts how this illusive vision might actually become a viable research and service platform this side of eternity. The influential historical link between CP proponents is Søren Kierkegaard, who described the contribution of his theological/philosophical work as Christian psychology (C. S. Evans, *Søren Kierkegaard's Christian Psychology* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990]; E. L. Johnson, *Foundations for Soul Care*). The current proposal is cast as "development of a distinctly Christian *version* of psychology: a wise science of individual human beings that includes theory building, research, teaching, training and various kinds of practice, including the care of souls. This science flows from a Christian understanding of human nature and therefore can be distinguished from alternative versions of psychology based on different worldviews" (p. 9).

The sheer enormity of the undertaking is as striking as it is controversial. Nevertheless, it does not overwhelm the comprehensive and scholarly groundwork offered. The book's subtitle—*A Christian Psychology Proposal*—might be descriptive, but it will appear deceptive to readers who enter anticipating a preliminary sketch of the soul care endeavor ahead. Given the in-depth epistemological, theological, biblical, historical, and psychological scope, readers will be likely to cite *Foundations* as a noteworthy reference, not as an introductory essay that encapsulates the musings of a visionary. Whether to agree, amplify, or dispute, those who train students in counseling, pastoral care, psychology, and related disciplines now have an ample base, insightfully informed by Christian tradition, for consideration of intricately complex matters. Johnson addresses four major topics: (1) the pervasive controversies surrounding the delivery of Christian-oriented nurture and remediation; (2) the differing positions on scriptural authority; (3) a plausible Christian view of human beings as holistic spiritual beings; and (4) the priority of cultivating "inwardness" as a central activity within soul care conversation.

To develop an appreciation for his contribution, each of the four parts will be discussed in order using Johnson's section titles.

The opening chapters, collocated as Part One under the heading "Background to the Current Predicament," address the position of the Bible in the provision of soul care along with the serious divisions within evangelicalism over related epistemological concerns. Any discussion of the boundaries of a scientific discipline and theology without sifting through the influences of modernist and postmodernist assumptions would be meaningless. Johnson proceeds carefully through the treacherous battlefield where repetitive debates have raged. Passions do ignite amidst competing claims of authority over counseling care, the pervasiveness of worldview, risks of specialization, and the limits/dangers implicit in accessing secular/sacred sources. Those familiar with the intricacies of the Christian counseling controversies that Johnson references as the evangelical equivalent of a "Forty Years War" will appreciate this work. While the agenda of the author is not hidden in the history telling, a credible effort at fairness and thoroughness is plainly evident. A comprehensive documentation of these movements has long been lacking in the literature. One's position on epistemology does relate to theological conviction (or lack thereof) on revelation, the impact of sin, and the extent of grace. Johnson's insights equip the reader to separate out the subtleties surrounding the main arguments. For anyone grappling with the long standing divides and occasional similarities among Christian counseling camps, this evangelical oriented review is required reading. It summarizes competing paradigms, conflicting purposes, core principles, and parameters for practice. The author ultimately makes the claim that without the contributions from these differing viewpoints, the Christian psychology proposal would remain deadlocked in the realm of impossibility.

Particularly useful are the gradients Johnson articulates within the two models most frequently adopted by evangelicals. These are customarily known as the "integrationist" and "biblical counseling" views. Rather than collapse the imbedded details containing critical differences in order to make the contrasts clear, Johnson makes further distinctions to accentuate the core premises, overlapping elements, and similarities. For example, the common assumptions within the integrationist position are outlined: scientific progress is a manifestation of common grace; all truth reflects the unity created by a divine Creator; and general revelation is accessible by all human beings. These points are then tempered by an accompanying discussion of the noetic effects of sin, a recognition of worldview dependency, and the confusing dualism that arises from a sharp separation between theology and psychology. Through the use of the notion of control beliefs, Johnson distinguishes between *strong conceptual integration* (SCI), where a commitment to Scripture preserves the essentials of Christian theology, and *weak conceptual integration* (WCI), where the Bible is mere sourcebook to illustrate psychological concepts or as a basic resource for mechanistic screening of psychological content. Willingness to actively engage secular theories and empirically oriented research remains the hallmark characteristic of the integration perspective. Yet, an informed Christian conceptual framework is shown to be an essential commitment to resist the secular ideological tenets rampant in contemporary psychology and clinical practice.

The biblical counseling movement (BCM) maintains the steadfast assertion that Christian counseling should view the Bible as its sole critical authoritative resource. This essential keeps the BCM emphasis solidly theocentric. Johnson suggests that there are at least three subtypes of the BCM and that each would defend the sufficiency of the Bible for soul care. The psychoheresy network rejects all psychological terminology as well as any counseling effort that mimics secular practice such as fee-for-service, timed sessions, and reference to diagnostic procedures. Traditional biblical counseling (TBC) follows the leanings of Jay Adams toward *noutheteō* or counseling as

admonishment. It holds tenaciously to the antithesis principle stating that any modern psychology that originates from non-Christian sources is invalid. The third variation that Johnson identifies is progressive biblical counseling (PBC) whose proponents tend to be willing to dialogue with those from other viewpoints, place value on the use of the helping relationship, apply counseling session formats used in mainstream approaches, and appropriate the occasional select method from a medical or empirical source. Working through these variations of position is not a venture in nuanced labeling. Rather, fine differences are shown in the application of the core BCM tenet. Johnson summarizes where extremism might inadvertently pull unwary proponents: "As the inspired, inerrant, enscripturated Word of God, the Bible reveals principles of eternally abiding value and validity, particularly for soul care, but it must not be equated with God's infinite understanding of anything; otherwise, irony of ironies, Bible-loving conservatives may become guilty of bibliolatry" (p. 124). When Johnson finishes this review, the sympathetic reader may grasp the benefit and the potential for those with SCI and BCM leanings to join forces. If there is a common Christian worldview, an unyielding alliance to hold Scripture in high regard, and a desire to see Jesus Christ glorified, is there not ample ground for cooperative exchange?

In Part Two, "Texts and Contexts," the main thrust of Johnson's argument unfolds following a critical appraisal of hard and soft-core dualism, in both religious and secular forms. Such dualism promotes compartmentalization to the detriment of a holistic understanding. The inclusion of theology as a metadiscipline infuses a rich heritage into the soul care discussion that offers psychological insights consistent with a Christian worldview. He contends that "Christians must concede that the twentieth century was the modernist century for psychology. But perhaps the early twenty-first century would be a good time for a radical recommitment to a Christian worldview and a reinvestment in the unique resources of the Christian tradition" (p. 164). The view that psychology must be exclusively empirical is vigorously challenged as a modernist frame that has now lost its hold: "Let us suppose that there is really only one object of study for Christians in psychology and soul care—individual human beings—but there are multiple modalities that can be used to help us discern the nature of that object, including research on humans using natural science methods, as well as first-person articulations of human experience, philosophical reflection and analysis, human science research, research on humans using natural science methods, literature, the Christian intellectual tradition and most importantly, Scripture" (p. 144). In a postmodern, pluralistic age, the ideal of a generic, perspective-free psychology is to be abandoned. Christians therefore should pursue multiple methods to eventually contribute a fortified, viable, and robust alternative to the range of available psychologies. Indeed, there may be more than one Christian psychology, as there is not a single Christian theological heritage.

In the fifth chapter focused on what the Bible offers to this effort in relation to other texts, there are extremely valuable sections reviewing Scripture's authority, necessity, sufficiency, and primacy. Scripture is not a source solely for propositions; it is God's word calling for dominion over a believer's life and work. The conclusion contends that the property of primacy best carries forward into the current era the Reformation assertion of *sola scriptura*. Thus, the Word of God is central to the pursuit of a soul care that edifies, not as momentary relief but with a view towards eternity. The "Bible is the final, ultimate norm regarding human beings and their psychospiritual healing, so that it must set the agenda for Christian psychology and soul care" (p. 191; original italics removed).

In Part Three, "'Let There Be Humans': The Semiodiscursive Constitution of Human Beings," Johnson turns from concerns stemming from epistemology, theology, teleology, and methodology to the actual content of a Christian psychology. As the topic shifts to the nature of human beings, a Christian personality theory is articulated regarding

creatures made *imago Dei*. Human persons reflect God by existing as “signs” of his goodness and glory. Meaning flows from the creation narrative through the fall and redemption into the life stories of the children of God. Human beings who are in Christ function in the world as a sign of his handiwork, as restoration proceeds by grace under the ministry of the Holy Spirit within human community. The reader acquainted with Kevin Vanhoozer’s *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), will notice similar applications from speech-act theory applied in this context to the spiritual vitality of a human life. The personality proposal is structured according to four interactive orders of discourse—biological, psychosocial, ethical, and spiritual. Thus, the emphasis on a methodology for building a Christian psychology actually continues, not by means of instruction, but via immediate demonstration.

The orders of discourse are a way of exploring the development of human beings according to a multi-ordered complexity that establishes meaning to glorify the Creator. There is an inherent doxological *telos* to human development and nature. The progression of growth in personal agency, relatedness, cognition, and conscience does emerge from the biological through the psychosocial towards higher meaning contained in the ethical and spiritual orders. As these four orders are perpetually under the providential support of the Son of God, there is a “transcendent grounding.” This implies that while the lower strata do contribute to the upper, each is ultimately contingent upon God’s transcendent sustenance in the spiritual order (p. 363). For those who tire of the psychological practice that commonly describes human beings for sake of convenience as biopsychosocial and (sometimes) spiritual, this depiction will be a welcomed conceptualization. Such interrelated orders are not mere conceptual domains but function as emergent, interactive systems. The spiritual is cast as central, meaningful, and realistically potent. Johnson builds on Calvin’s concept of the *sensus divinitatis* assuming a cognitive mechanism and capacity producing beliefs about God that contribute to the formation and adoption of a religious system that provides coherent, spiritual meaning (p. 349).

There is considerable material in these chapters for ongoing theoretical contemplation as well as research. As a transitional bridge into the next section on counseling care, the author closes this one with four rules that determine which order level is the best choice for intervention. In rule one, Christian providers are permitted and encouraged to work at *all* order levels, not exclusively in the spiritual order. Rule two then charges soul-care providers to operate at the *highest level possible*. Rule three complements the previous one by pointing out that providers should concentrate at the *lowest level necessary*. Applying rule two without three would be counterproductive. Rule four then states, “Christian soul-care providers need to transpose lower level activity into the spiritual order.” On the whole, these simple directions promote and protect a holism that should minimize religious dualism. These rules point to a comprehensive and theocentric approach. Yet, the broad application of these rules to all counselor practice settings and, in particular, the import of rule four, will require further reflection. The strict application of this final rule by a Christian counselor functioning in a secular or medical setting will be complex and has critical professional ethical implications. Dialogue in the academic square on rule four is anticipated, for this will again highlight the distinctions in the practice spheres where Christians offer service (pp. 382–83).

One feature of this work that occurs throughout and was pronounced in this section is the author’s style of allowing praise to enter the stream of the argument. This was an appreciated source of personal edification.

In Part Four, “The Communication of God’s Glory in Christian Soul Care,” a prominent theme is inwardness or the furthering of a God honoring interiority or inner life. It would be an unfortunate mistake to equate this construct with basic

self-understanding, knowledge, or insight. The construct encompasses enhancement and growth in cognitions, affections, relationships, and God glorifying action. Johnson traces the emphasis on inwardness from its roots in Old Testament wisdom literature to the New Testament's treatment of union in Christ to explicit treatment within Christian tradition. This theme brings into the contemporary context Kierkegaard's sense of the importance of inwardness as the key process for Christian maturation. Inwardness does require self-awareness and a transparent appraisal of one's sinful state before God. Beyond acknowledgement, inwardness becomes a way of outwardly living intentionally and consciously before the Lord in such a way that the self is defined and granted meaning (p. 430). Here again, the importance of God's Word is given high value, for it is through Scripture, the speech of God, that our very nature is impacted. Our attention and activity moves from primarily autocentric to dominantly theocentric purposes (p. 431).

There is depth packed in the over 200 pages detailing the contours of how transformation of the person occurs by the Word directly or in creative triologue—conversations between self and other where the Triune God is intentionally included. There is a refreshing transcendent and interpersonal vibrancy to the style of soul care depicted. This excels far above one-dimensional soul care models where unidirectional teaching tends to dominate. What is remarkable is how the frequent citations from great Christian writers (e.g. Augustine, Baxter, Edwards, Kierkegaard) are interspersed so freely with contemporary theologians, psychological theorists, and researchers. There is a stirring blend of soul care and spiritual formation material united in this counseling oriented section.

Johnson's epilogue closes with an invitation: *repondez s'il vous plaît. So, merci beaucoup! On y va!*

First, for those in academia or ministry who routinely peruse *JETS*, *Foundations for Soul Care* should prove to be a stimulating read. Given its broad scope in terms of theology, epistemology, and philosophy, there is considerable material for critical review, refinement, and potential expansion from those outside of counseling and pastoral care. While herein lies the book's strength, it also raises a caution. How readily accessible is this "foundational" material to typical seminarians, professionals in training, and Christian counselors in the field? Professors in Christian universities and seminary departments in subject areas directly related to psychology should add this work to their review list. Text adoption at the basic master's level may be problematic. (The case for adoption could be convincing if using this work is a means to increase the theological depth of soul care providers. Still, it is the steepness of the learning curve that must be assessed.) Nevertheless, theologians who instruct those entering the social sciences will find Johnson to be a worthy dialogue partner; this is particularly the case for those who share a Reformed theology. Should an interview committee be searching for a suitable query to pose a candidate for a counseling post in an evangelical educational institution, consider this: What do you make of Eric Johnson's argument regarding the primacy of Scripture in soul care, its use as a semantic and axiological "touchstone," and its application in shaping lives within the redemptive-historical metanarrative of the Gospel (p. 189)?

Second, the Christian psychology offered as a foundation for soul nurture is impressive. Unfortunately, the major application in the final section to traditional one-on-one, remedially oriented counseling may be far too restrictive. Should not a soul care of edification this hearty be applied in a comprehensive manner to preaching, educational ministry, and the overall faith development efforts of the body of Christ? As presented, although refreshing, the Christian psychology model for actual field implementation has considerable pioneering work ahead. From the perspective of this reviewer with considerable clinical background, these conceptual frameworks require adaptation,

specification, and simplification to make practitioner application plausible and service delivery feasible. Such a “project” is the vision cast by the author; thus, the preliminary excursion into application should be posed as tentative or at least selective. Does this framework have *current* soul care viability in a *full* array of counseling contexts? A conservative appraisal would be prudent. Widespread, unrestricted, present release would be reckless. (My thoughts do wander to highly plausible scenarios where such application may have adverse repercussions. Experience in the close supervision of numerous entry-level counselors provokes this caution.) The mood of the public social service sector and the medical mental health system may not be shifting towards a form of pluralism conducive to inclusion of an explicit Christian presence. (Johnson is acutely aware of the tension he is raising in this regard; pp. 255–58; 378–79, 462–64.) Instead, a general appreciation for what encounter with the sacred may offer clients has generated generic, empirically validated techniques for therapy that foster individually governed spiritually (e.g. K. Pargament, *Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy: Understanding and Addressing the Sacred* [New York: Guilford, 2007]). The field remains skeptical and resistant to exclusive, revelation-based models, and that is precisely what is being proposed. In addition, there are no explicit guidelines for specific disorders or concerns. Rather, there are extraordinary Christian principles for conceptual research and spiritual direction. Astute, quality Christian practitioners will be able to adopt recommendations as well as draw substantial motivation from these core premises. Novices will not find methods to guide the helping process, although they will be grounded to have confidence in Scripture and in the ultimate direction of care. Even the limited vision of this reviewer can discern exciting possibilities *if* those from the BCM and SCI counseling movements could be enlisted to dialogue regarding realistic applications in the church and clinic. Such cooperative ventures would demand actually learning from the history lesson of the recent Christian counseling wars. The result might be prayerful engagement and increased dialogue regarding soul care convictions held in common.

Third, the extraordinary creativity and scholarship of the author is evident. The mission is to construct an alternative to the psychologies dominating the field from secular ideological assumptions. The stated intent is to develop a distinctive psychology fit for an orthodox Christian worldview. *What building will be erected on this foundation?* Will fortresses arise or places of hospitality? Johnson acknowledges that the choice of a preferred Christian counseling model may be a matter of location, and he directly asserts that the different agendas need not be incompatible. Progressive biblical counseling is taught in seminaries and bible colleges with extensive application in evangelical congregations. Strong integration serves well those professionals who are Christ followers engaging the culture at large. Clearly, if empirical research is valued for the CP effort, integration minded participants will be essential because the methodology itself demands this. Finally, the author early on makes this statement: “Christian psychology is interested in the science of psychology and would be of greater interest to psychology teachers, researchers, practitioners and others dedicated to developing distinctively Christian versions of psychology and scientifically complex models of soul care” (p. 192). There are later occasions where Johnson’s enthusiasm for CP may stir in the reader the urge to consider if this location “truce” proposal will hold. In my view, there is wisdom in these words. Will those who build on the foundation have ears to hear?

The once impossible dream of Christian psychology now has secure footings. These seem secure enough to hold a worthy building. Given the position of Scripture and the edification *telos* of Johnson’s soul care proposal, the quest is intriguing and perhaps even prophetic. In closing, there is an embedded appeal for those from the numerous specialty areas represented in the ETS. The CP proposal reopens a way for other

disciplines to make extremely important contributions to the ministry of soul care. From those with expertise in exegesis to Christian philosophy to church history to theology, this Christian psychology endeavor has significant openings for all those who wish to contribute their skills in the construction. Such an undertaking, and this foundation, is heartily recommended.

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Integrative Psychotherapy. By Mark R. McMinn and Clark D. Campbell. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007, 403 pp., \$29.00.

Mark McMinn and Clark Campbell have written a refreshing and remarkably versatile text on Christian counseling and cognitive therapy. *Integrative Psychotherapy* is clearly written and very readable, avoiding both the pop psychology genre and the laboriously technical textbook genre. The primary strength of the book, however, is that it manages to stay readable while covering considerable ground. *Integrative Psychotherapy* manages to double as both a primer on the integration of psychology and evangelical theology and a primer on cognitive therapy; thus, both clinicians and educators will find this a useful resource. The biggest challenge for educators will be whether to use this book for its position on integration or for training students in the use of cognitive therapy.

As psychologists, McMinn and Campbell clearly target professional counselors and their educators, although theologians and scholars of pastoral care will benefit from their coverage of the role of counseling in Christianity. *Integrative Psychotherapy* is not a self-help book and will probably be more for clinical use than for the individual looking for helpful principles. Pastors looking for a single reference style primer on pastoral care would probably be better suited to go with Gary Collin's *Christian Counseling* (2007), which is now in an updated third edition, or a similar title.

McMinn and Campbell provide a strong case for integrating psychology and theology, and this text is an exemplar of this position. Those who believe that to know truly the Creator one should study both God's creation (general revelation) as well as God's Word (special revelation) will be at home with McMinn and Campbell's arguments. They do an excellent job of discussing the *imago Dei* and hermeneutology. Their coverage of models of pastoral care and hermeneutics is good but not nearly as in-depth or comprehensive as their coverage of the *imago Dei*. They do not provide a summary of alternative Christian approaches to counseling such as historical or modern models of pastoral care or chaplaincy, spiritual direction or spiritual formation, biblical counseling such as Jay Adam's Nouthetic Counseling, or Christian Psychology, the latest entry into the debate on Christian counseling (see Stephen Greggo's review of Eric Johnson's *Foundations for Soul Care: A Christian Psychology Proposal*, in this issue of *JETS*). A better summary of differing views is Johnson and Jones's (2000) *Psychology and Christianity: Four Views*.

McMinn and Campbell provide a solid evangelical foundation for their work. Their references include historical staples such as Augustine, Calvin, and Barth; contemporary evangelicals like Bloesch, Erickson, Hoekema, Plantinga, Sproul, Grenz, and Packer; as well as authors popular with evangelicals such as C. S. Lewis, Willard, and Nouwen (a Roman Catholic priest and psychologist who has been surprisingly popular among many evangelicals). McMinn has written previously on sin, and readers should be pleasantly surprised to find a more complex and robust discussion of sin and guilt than is often present in Christian self-help books. Less robust, however, is the coverage of

the role and work of the Holy Spirit in counseling, change, or transformation. If evangelical theologians historically have given brief attention to pneumatology, Christian counselors of all approaches have certainly done so.

McMinn and Campbell hit their stride when discussing psychology and cognitive therapy. Teachers who have been looking for a current foundational cognitive-behavioral therapy textbook need look no longer. *Integrative Psychotherapy* provides an excellent background on the development of cognitive therapy, its theoretical underpinnings, and the core techniques and interventions for anxiety disorders and depressive disorders. It does not cover the counseling of couples, intervention with personality disorders, or addictions. Fortunately, there are many good texts covering these specific populations and their treatment.

Integrative Psychotherapy provides one of the best summaries of outcome research and its importance to date. To counseling faculty this chapter alone is worth the cost of the book. Comparable coverage by Lambert (2003) or Wampold (2001) will cost more than twice as much and require reading hundreds of pages. Hubble, Duncan, and Miller (1999) provide equally readable coverage of common factors of change, but McMinn and Campbell have condensed all that Hubble, Duncan, and Miller cover into one chapter and added a primer on the statistics of meta-analysis and Prochaska and DiClemente's stages of change. This is probably the clearest and most succinct coverage of outcome research available and will be invaluable to pastors, theologians, and graduate students wanting to understand this material without having to take a graduate course in statistics.

Equally as good is the chapter on the development of cognitive therapy. This chapter provides a thorough understanding of the theoretical groundwork of cognitive therapy and the major milestones without getting bogged down in names, dates, and competing schools of thought. McMinn and Campbell are not compelled to pay homage to the popularly considered founders of psychology. This leaves the reader free to grasp cognitive therapy without having to try and understand psychoanalysis or Gestalt therapy along the way. The authors do not neglect relevant concepts, however, including major contributions from developmental, social, and interpersonal psychology. Postmodern readers will appreciate the discussion on constructivist cognitive therapies, even if cognitive theorists appear to have pinned the hopes of cognitive therapy on empirically supported treatment manuals rather than on promising contributions to postmodern notions of collaboration, meta- individual and community narratives, multidirectional influence, and co-constructed meaning.

Expanding on the earlier work of Jones and Butman (1991), McMinn and Campbell review at some length the philosophical strengths and weaknesses of cognitive therapy. They highlight this therapy's relative simplicity, goal-focus, tendency to be time-limited, and empowering nature. Moreover, they discuss how it avoids both a strict determinism and total freedom of choice. At the same time, they raise numerous concerns with cognitive therapy, including its pragmatic rationalism; faulty assumptions about human motivations, reason, and health; and the inability (disinterest?) of semantic cognitive therapy to propose a theory of personality. For example, McMinn and Campbell note that human relationships are of less importance than reason in a cognitive model, but most people value relationships over reason. They observe that people do not enter therapy to acquire rational thinking; rather, people enter therapy to feel better. And ultimately, the authors aver, without some existential foundation, cognitive approaches have little to offer a hurting and broken world where conflict, pain, and death are inevitable. McMinn and Campbell make a particularly compelling case that while cognitive therapy is largely based on the notion that people develop unhealthy negative schemas about themselves and the world, in reality social psychology teaches that people are just as likely or more likely to make overly positive (self-serving) cognitive errors.

The primary focus of *Integrative Psychotherapy* is its attempt to build a uniquely Christian model of counseling that uses truths learned from God's created order (science as understood to be the study of the principles of how creation works) within a wholly biblical understanding of who created the world, what is the meaning of creation, and what is wrong with creation. McMinn and Campbell propose a three domains-of-intervention approach. Each domain is modeled after an aspect of the *imago Dei*, and interventions in each domain corresponds to different cognitive-behavioral and interpersonal techniques.

The first domain is presented as consistent with humanity's functional creation—reflecting God's image in that “humans have the capacity to manage themselves and their environment, to behave in particular ways that reflect God's character” (p. 114). Counseling interventions that fall in this category aim to improve or enhance adaptive behavior, to reduce symptoms that prompt individuals to seek counseling. This first domain is described as “symptom-focused” and a thoughtful treatment is given to “a ministry of common grace” (p. 123) that seeks to reduce human suffering and increase the capacity for coping with distress. McMinn and Campbell argue that counselors need to accept that not every client has deep-seated problems that will require lengthy treatment or a sustained focus on the past. They are also pragmatic enough to recognize that not every client is introspective; accordingly, such individuals should be helped to find symptom relief without the counselor feeling compelled to address every personality quirk that might be improved with prolonged psychotherapy. Interventions that are suggested for use in this domain include skill building, problem solving, and cognitive-restructuring. *Integrative Psychotherapy* spends considerable time explaining thought records, cognitive rehearsal, and other mainstays of cognitive therapy. Counseling students will find the chapter on applying symptom-focused treatment to anxiety problems very practical. Pastors and theologians may be tempted to skim the coverage of specific disorders such as phobias, panic attacks, and posttraumatic stress disorder.

The second domain is patterned after God's structural image—the notion that “human beings share something substantive with God, often identified as our rational and moral capacity” (p. 128). Counseling interventions in this second category aim to correct faulty beliefs and distorted cognitions by helping “people interpret and find meaning in their lives” (p. 129). This second domain is schema-focused, looking beyond automatic thoughts to core assumptions and beliefs. McMinn and Campbell argue that core beliefs are more resistant to change than automatic thoughts. They describe core beliefs as organized perceptions of how the world works; such perceptions are reinforced by experiences rooted in the general brokenness of sinful humanity living in a fallen world. Individuals suffer both because of the devastating effects of specific sins and because of the distorted conclusions the sinful mind comes up with. An orthodox understanding of original sin necessitates appreciating how widespread and recalcitrant human distortions of truth and experiences are. Helping clients make meaning of the world requires the counselor to be equally adept at schema deactivation and creating a biblical identity in Christ. McMinn and Campbell come close to espousing the counselor's need to be skilled in spiritual formation or discipleship, but they stop short of such an endorsement. While they place *Integrative Psychotherapy* on a continuum of soul care, they remain uneasy with advocating for traditional faith practices within the counseling session. It is important for the client to be clearly informed of the service they are paying for/receiving, but some practitioners may hold spiritual disciplines as indispensable to such transformative work.

The third domain seeks to address humanity's interpersonal aspirations as reflective of God's relational image; accordingly, relational conflicts are reflective of the destructive impact sin has on relationships. While the first two domains are examples of integrating cognitive therapy with faith, the third domain leaves cognitive-behavioral foundations

and integrates faith with more interpersonal and psychodynamic concepts. This addition helps to offset the logic-heavy shortcomings of cognitive-behavioral therapy. This section retains the clear readable style of the rest of *Integrative Psychotherapy* but unfortunately, in a parallel to the strengths and weaknesses of cognitive therapy and interpersonal therapies, this section is the least comprehensive and the most ambiguous. Just as cognitive therapy is liked because of its simplicity and clear techniques, psychodynamic approaches can be incredibly complex with few concrete interventions.

Integrative Psychotherapy sets the objectives of this third domain as addressing “spiritual longings, relational wounds, unresolved conflicts and personality problems” (p. 319). To achieve this goal it is proposed that “the power of a transformative relationship” (p. 321) is required. While ultimately Christ is the transformative relationship, how does a counselor facilitate that? A challenge for the authors is to describe a biblical role for the counselor that is still “clinical” and not pastoral. They meet the challenge head on, although how successfully they achieve this goal is debatable. The language may be more familiar to spiritual directors and psychoanalysis than traditional cognitive therapists. Indeed, it may seem to students of contemporary psychodynamic approaches that a well-known hero has emerged at the end of the story to rescue the *Integrative Psychotherapy* counselor from the inevitable personality-disordered client. Friends of cognitive-behavioral therapy on the other hand may suddenly find themselves in strange territory as McMinn and Campbell abandon talk of schemas and automatic thoughts in favor of comments such as “some clients must first ‘borrow’ the therapist’s observing ego in order to see things clearly” (p. 322).

Integrative Psychotherapy briefly describes the contributions of interpersonal psychiatry, object-relations, and family systems theory. These approaches just cannot be adequately described in a couple of paragraphs, although McMinn and Campbell manage to maintain their readable style throughout. The seasoned psychotherapist will find these chapters agile and seamless for the extensive ground covered. Those unfamiliar with these approaches will have a harder time comprehending the magnitude of what lies within this domain. The authors defend the inclusion of an interpersonal component stating, “It is not so much that we are rejecting the cognitive model of conceptualizing and treating personality disorders as it is that we find it inadequate in its current form to address the deeply entrenched interpersonal patterns that plague many relationships” (p. 331). The weakness of this section of the book is not necessarily in what the book espouses; it is just that the language and concepts of interpersonal, systemic, and psychodynamic approaches require more explanation than a chapter or two can provide readers unfamiliar with the terrain.

McMinn and Campbell do a good job of highlighting the clinical and biblical significance of the relationship between the counselor and client. With its emphasis on grace, truth, presence, and soul-care, the chapter on applying relational-focused interventions will probably resonate particularly well with pastors and chaplains. This section should also refresh clinicians tired of a discipline increasingly focused on empirically-supported treatment manuals, techniques, and studies of effect sizes. If some of the earlier chapters on treating disorders seemed weighted toward psychology, this one weighs in toward faith and the transformative work of the person of Christ. The counseling student may be left asking, “But what does that *look* like? How do I *do* that?” Instructors may want to direct those students to traditional interpersonal sources, although even with a bookshelf of psychodynamic texts, I still find myself asking those questions. Of course one could always relate a story from an early desert father or strike a contemplative pose and say, “It isn’t so much something you *do*; it’s who you *are*.”

Integrative Psychotherapy is an immensely readable text that will reward its readers with its coverage of the basis for integration, its summary of outcome research, its summary of the development of cognitive-behavioral therapy, and its attempt to

build a uniquely Christian model of counseling that applies the truths from both God's Word and his created order. It will stretch readers not well versed in both Scripture and psychology, but it also represents how far integration has progressed in that it is assumed that readers will be familiar with both disciplines. In this regard *Integrative Psychotherapy* exemplifies the type of integration in which most practitioners still do not engage: a serious examination of current research into human behavior and a commitment to both studying and abiding by God's unchanging and inerrant Word. Though I don't think this is the only counseling book that should adorn the bookshelves of pastors, theologians, and therapists, I do recommend that all scholars of pastoral care and counseling read it and find shelf space for it.

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Getting to Know the Church Fathers: An Evangelical Introduction. By Bryan M. Litfin. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007, 304 pp., \$ 22.99 paper.

Bryan Litfin has rendered a great service to students of early church history (and the professors who teach them) in this introductory patristics text. In ten chapters, Litfin narrates the stories of ten Church fathers—seven Greek (Ignatius of Antioch, Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, Athanasius, John Chrysostom, and Cyril of Alexandria) and three Latin (Tertullian, Perpetua, and Augustine). The reader will immediately notice the author's rightful inclusion of a woman, Vibia Perpetua, in his account of the Fathers—a group largely determined by their literary and theological output in the first five centuries.

As an introduction to patristics, this book generally resembles Ramsey's *Beginning to Read the Fathers* (a work cited by Litfin for further reading in his introductory chapter) yet it is distinct because Ramsey organizes his survey around themes (e.g., Scripture, prayer, monasticism) and certainly writes from a Roman Catholic perspective. Litfin's book might also be compared to Chadwick's *The Early Church*; yet, this work, first published nearly forty years ago, focuses more on early Christian movements and is generally more difficult reading. Litfin, correctly noting that most patristics texts are doctrinal in nature (e.g. Kelly's *Early Christian Doctrines*), chooses a biographical and narrative approach instead. Not only does this approach successfully invite and engage the modern reader, it is faithful to the patristic worldview that valued remembering the lives and concrete models of faith through a tradition of sacred biography (a corpus that numbered over 8,000 individual biographies by the medieval period).

Litfin's unique biographical approach is a necessary complement to existing patristics scholarship. He has made the early Church fathers accessible and inviting to evangelical students who may have little exposure to, background for, and consequent interest in this period. Litfin's work contributes to the growing evangelical interest and scholarly output in patristics that presently includes works like Chris Hall's *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* and *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*; InterVarsity's *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (Thomas Oden, ed.), and Baker Academic's present series, *Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future*.

Litfin's work has numerous strengths, including being resourceful, inviting, accessible, integrative, and engaging. I will comment on each of these areas of strength.

In the opening pages, Litfin includes a helpful map (p. 8) of the Roman world to which readers can easily turn when unsure about the location of Nicea or Hippo, for example,

or when distinguishing between Eusebius of Cappadocian Caesarea and Eusebius of Palestinian Caesarea, for example. Furthermore, he includes a timeline dating from 800 BC to AD 500 noting key events in the church and politics as well as the lives of the Fathers (pp. 9–10). At the end of each chapter, Litfin includes a bibliography with key secondary sources and a reference to the Fathers' writings in English translation, providing students with immediate resources for research.

Litfin's work is inviting to current evangelical undergraduate and seminary students. He accomplishes this by beginning each chapter with a captivating anecdote that bridges into the narrative of the particular Father to be treated. A man on death row introduces Ignatius of Antioch (pp. 31–33); Tertullian is likened to a gun blazing, Wild West cowboy (pp. 97–99); and C. S. Lewis's imaginative depiction of Narnia introduces the reader to Origen's exegetical method (pp. 142–43). These anecdotes serve to draw readers into the upcoming stories and pique interest in the Fathers. Furthermore, Litfin narrates these stories in an inviting way. For example, he winsomely tells of Justin's journey to faith (pp. 56–58) while compassionately recounting Origen's family background and later sufferings (pp. 144–47; 154–58). I laughed out loud when he described Augustine and Monica's relationship as bordering on "unhealthy codependence" (p. 217). He so effectively describes the layout of the city of Hippo that readers feel transported there (p. 228). Finally, Litfin concludes each chapter with a section called "a taste of"—a choice primary source reading from the father surveyed. More than admonishing students to journey to the library in search of these sources, Litfin inserts key texts into the book that will hopefully leave them yearning for more.

The accessibility of this book is another of its many strengths. This is especially true for people beginning to read the Fathers. While well written, it is free of technical terms and seems aimed at an undergraduate reading level. Each chapter ranges between twenty-two and twenty-six pages, enabling people to read a chapter in one sitting. Furthermore, Litfin does not assume that his readers have background knowledge of people, places, movements, or concepts that he treats. Appropriately, then, he fills in details about these matters for clarity's sake. For example, in chapter one, Litfin provides helpful background on the city of Antioch while making connections to Paul's letter to the Galatians (pp. 33–36). In his account of Justin, he expounds on the *pallium* and its significance as philosopher's clothing (pp. 58–59). In chapter three, he carefully explains Gnosticism (pp. 80–89) while outlining Marcion's thought in chapter four (pp. 105–8). His account of Perpetua includes a helpful definition of a catechumen (pp. 121–22). In chapter seven, Litfin aids readers with a survey of Constantine's rise to power and the resulting paradigm shift in church-state relations (pp. 168–72). Finally, in his chapter on Cyril, he nicely narrates the rise of the papacy (pp. 247–50).

Litfin also serves readers by clarifying some misconceptions about the Fathers. In his introductory chapter, he argues against the perception that they relied more on tradition as a means of spiritual authority by showing their great commitment to the Scriptures (pp. 20–22). Similarly, he relates that the Fathers were little "c" Catholics as opposed to Roman Catholics of Luther's day or even the present day (pp. 22–24). Litfin provides a balanced view of Origen. While the Alexandrian father is often depicted as a castrated Platonist given to excessive allegory, Litfin emphasizes Origen's great love for the Scriptures, gives a fair appraisal of his exegetical method, and offers a reminder of Origen's commitment to the *regula fidei* as a safeguard against irresponsible allegorizing (pp. 147–54). That said, Litfin objectively critiques Origen's theological errors, including Trinitarian subordinationism, purgatory, and universalism (p. 157). Litfin also responds to some misconceptions about Augustine's sexual life. Though Augustine was promiscuous for a brief period in his youth, Litfin has correctly shown that he was in a committed, monogamous relationship with an unnamed concubine for fourteen years in what modern readers might consider a common law marriage.

Augustine would have married this woman had she not been from a lower social class—a union prohibited by Roman law (pp. 220–21).

Litfin furthers the book's accessibility by making difficult theological issues understandable. In the first chapter, for example, he offers a plausible explanation for the development of the one bishop model of church leadership by noting Ignatius's reasoning that by investing more authority in one bishop, he would defend the church against heresy (pp. 42–43). Furthermore, Litfin carefully explains the role of the *regula fidei*—an area of specialty in his research—and its vital role in the historical development of biblical interpretation and the canon of Scripture. While this question raises evangelical concern for spiritual authority within the Scripture-tradition debate, Litfin remains a faithful evangelical and a faithful historian by showing how the church relied upon the *regula fidei* as a means of “guarding the good deposit of faith” (1 Tim 6:20) in the centuries prior to a formally recognized canon of Scripture. Furthermore, he provides a nice overview of the history of Trinitarian thought from Tertullian to the Council of Nicea (pp. 174–76). Readers will certainly benefit from Litfin's helpful summary before attempting to tackle more exhaustive accounts (e.g. Kelly, pp. 109–37; 252–79). Finally, Litfin offers a clear distinction between Alexandrian and Antiochene exegesis (pp. 149–54; 197–201) while navigating the reader safely through the thorny Nestorian issue (pp. 251–54).

Another of Litfin's strengths is that despite taking a biographical approach, he craftily integrates into the narrative discussions of politics, heresy, theological movements, and the like, along with accounts of other Fathers who did not make Litfin's “top ten” list. In his account of Irenaeus, for example, he summarizes issues surrounding the historical development of the NT canon (p. 90). Through John Chrysostom's story, he treats the rise and development of monasticism (pp. 192–97). He impressively synthesizes the entire patristic period in his chapter on Cyril (pp. 254–58).

A final strength is the engaging nature of this book. While Litfin's narrative and dialog approach certainly stimulate reflection on the Fathers, he goes a step farther by providing several discussion questions at the end of each chapter to help readers engage on a deeper level. These questions could be used to spark classroom discussion or help a church small group as its members read the book devotionally.

Though quite impressed with Litfin's work overall, I find several weaknesses. On a grammatical/style level, I am not comfortable with the use of contractions—something Litfin uses throughout—in academic writing. I also have reservations with the use of the second person singular/plural in formal writing.

In terms of selection of material, I am not in full agreement with Litfin's “top ten” list of Fathers. Specifically, I must complain about the absence of Cyprian and Ambrose from the Latin Fathers and the lack of a chapter dedicated to the Cappadocians Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa, the primary architects of fourth century theological development of the Trinity and the Holy Spirit. Though these Fathers do make it into the book, their stature should earn them more focused attention. On the other hand, I have trouble with how much attention Cyril receives. Though Litfin has argued for Cyril's careful exegesis and important role in the Nestorian controversy, I am not convinced that he should be so distinguished in light of his less than exemplary political maneuvering—especially when he is “sharing the stage” with the likes of Ignatius, Perpetua, and Chrysostom. It is no secret that Litfin's mentor, Robert Wilken is a great fan of Cyril. Could it be that this influence has willed Cyril into such prominence in this book?

In the realm of historical and interpretive issues, I have a few problems. Specifically, Litfin positively refers to Justin's “eclectic” apologetic and theological method without addressing the dangers of syncretism (p. 68). Perhaps this would have been a good place to bring up Tertullian's “Jerusalem over Athens” approach by way of contrast. Also,

Litfin's treatment of Montanism is less than satisfying. With little more than conjecture, he alleges that this movement was not regarded as a third-century heresy because one of its members, Tertullian, was such a champion of orthodoxy. Also, Litfin fails to support the claim that North African Montanism differed from its source in Asia Minor (p. 129). My question, then, is why is there no *St. Tertullian*? Finally, I am concerned about Litfin comparing the Montanists to modern charismatics. Though others have popularly proposed this parallel, the issues, theology, and contexts are so different between the two groups that the comparisons are not warranted. It also opens the door for a charismatic "trail of blood" to the early church.

Though Litfin nicely handles canonicity in chapter four, I have two concerns about his arguments. First, he suggests that Christianity became "more of a book religion by the mid-second century" (p. 109). Does this mean that the Scriptures were merely circulating in the memories of oral communicators for sixty to one hundred years? How are we to understand the rather "bookish" language of Scripture about itself (cf. Luke 1:1-4; 1 Tim 5:18; 2 Pet 3:15)? What then was the role of the *lectores* referenced by early second century Fathers Justin Martyr (*First Apology*, 67) and 2 *Clement* 19:1? Second, Litfin indicates that Constantine enabled church leaders to make pronouncements about the content of Scripture toward the establishment of a canon. While the emperor's request of Eusebius of Caesarea for fifty Greek Bibles in ca. 330 establishes this claim, it should be noted that the key church councils that discussed the issue (Laodoea, 363; Hippo, 393; Carthage, 397) were local councils not convened by imperial decree. Furthermore, Athanasius's Easter letter in 367, which listed the canonical Scriptures, was written after five exiles and an ecclesiastical career spent battling Constantine and his sons due to their Arian leanings.

Another area of concern focuses on issues of historiography and sources. Litfin's chapter on Perpetua is based largely on her diaries in the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*. The consensus of patristic scholarship today, however, is that the account is wildly biased, glossed, and therefore historically suspect. Though Litfin certainly has a case for responsible use of this source, his chapter would be well served with a substantive footnote answering critics of hagiography while defending his position. Similarly, his accounts of Ambrose and Augustine's ordinations are also based on hagiographical sources—Paulinus of Milan and Possidius of Calama (pp. 223, 227-28). Again, these sources can be admitted as historical evidence especially when other corroborating sources can be identified (e.g. Augustine's sermons and letters); however, the criticism of opponents of hagiography should not go unanswered.

As words and their meanings are foundational to history, I have concerns with Litfin's terminology in two cases. First, he likens Tertullian to a Christian "fundamentalist" in a region—North Africa—that is now dominated by Islamic "fundamentalism" (p. 104). In Christian circles alone, fundamentalism is certainly a loaded term, patient of a plethora of definitions and uses. Islamic fundamentalism, though historically traceable to several movements in recent centuries, certainly does not typify the average modern Tunisian—the inheritors of the Roman soil where Tertullian lived. Hence, this term should be avoided for the unnecessary confusion it causes. Secondly, I have a general aversion to Litfin's use of "barbarian" to describe the conquering Goths (p. 249). Though they did act barbarically, so did the Nicene-leaning Roman Emperor Theodosius when he slaughtered 7,000 inhabitants of Thessalonica in 388! Such prejudicial language ought to be avoided, and it would seem better to refer to the Goths by their ethno-linguistic or geographical identity while recounting their nefarious deeds.

Despite my critiques, I recommend this patristics primer to professors and students of early Christianity. Personally, I have adopted it as one of my texts for an introduction to patristics course. Resourceful, inviting, accessible, integrative, and engaging as it is, this book is inspiring reading for contemporary pastors and laypeople who reflect on

the early church as they forge ahead to be the church of Jesus Christ in the twenty-first century.

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There is a God. How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind. By Antony G. N. Flew. New York: HarperOne, 2007, xxiv + 222 pp., \$24.95 paper.

"The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" said Chicken Little. The world atheist community certainly thinks it has fallen. Their hero and granddaddy, the "world's most notorious atheist," says he now believes in "God." This has caused quite a stir. For over sixty-five years, since he left Kingswood School in Bath at the age of fifteen (as Flew himself notes, "I can say that whatever faith I had when I entered K.S. was gone by the time I finished"; p. 11). He was an atheist—and not a quiet one, taking on all comers, including this reviewer, in debate on the question of the existence of God.

Flew once told me in a personal conversation that he was really an agnostic; he believed that there was not sufficient evidence or good reason to believe in God. However, Flew went on to say that the question of whether such a Being existed or not was so very important that he made a public plea to all comers—took a stand—so he could be convinced if there was a God. Over the years many have tried to convince him, but to no avail.

This changed several years ago. I had first met Tony Flew in February, 1985, in Dallas at what he refers to as the "Shootout at the O.K. Corral" (p. 69). Early in the morning in 2004, Flew called me from England. He proceeded to tell me that he had just reread the first half of our debate: Terry L. Miethe and Anthony Flew, *Does God Exist: A Believer and An Atheist Debate* (HarperCollins, 1991). He said that he no longer had any substantial disagreement with anything I had said in my part of the debate. Later he said the same thing to me, in a letter dated 27 April 2004: "I have just finished rereading about the first one hundred pages of our book and find that I do not now disagree with much you said in those pages. I think we may well find that we reach very substantial agreement without needing extra time." From "the world's most notorious atheist," Flew had moved to one of the world's newest theists! However, there may be more than meets the eye, or *less* as it were, to this whole story. First things first, though, and that is a review of his book.

The preface, written by Roy Abraham Varghese, starts with the quote from an Associated Press headline on 9 December 2004: "Famous Atheist Now Believes in God, More or Less Based on Scientific Evidence." Varghese mentions Flew's paper "Theology and Falsification," first presented at a 1950 meeting of the Oxford University Socratic Club chaired by C. S. Lewis, which "became the most widely reprinted philosophical publication of the last century." In this new book, Varghese continues, Flew "gives an account of the arguments and evidence that led him to change his mind. . . . Curiously, the response to the AP story from Flew's fellow atheists verged on hysteria" (p. viii). Varghese rounds out his preface with discussions of "Flew's Significance in the History of Atheism," "Flew, Logical Positivism, and the Rebirth of Rational Theism," and "The 'New Atheism' or Positivism Redux."

In the introduction, Flew writes: "Ever since the announcement of my 'conversion' to deism, I have been asked on numerous occasions to provide an account of the factors that led me to change my mind. . . . I have now been persuaded to present here what might be called my last will and testament" (p. 1). This is the purpose of this new book.

Flew maintains that his conversion has nothing to do with his age (contrary to Jay Leno's joke on national television) and that he still denies the existence of an "afterlife. . . . For the record, then, I want to lay to rest all those rumors that have me placing Pascalian bets" (p. 2). Moreover, Flew wants the reader to know that this is not the first time he has changed his mind. He was once a Marxist and once held "that all human choices are determined entirely by physical causes."

The first three chapters composing the first part ("My Denial of the Divine") discuss what Flew believed before he changed his mind about God and why. In chapter one, Flew tells us that the problem of evil was one of the early reasons for his conversion to atheism (p. 13). Interestingly, he comments: "But by January 1946, when I was nearly twenty-three, the word had gotten out—and back to my parents—that I was . . . an atheist. . . . However, today, well over half a century later, I can say that my father would be hugely delighted by my present view on the existence of God—not least because he would consider this a great help to the cause of the Christian church" (p. 16). I do not know anything of the truth of Flew's statement, but his father would be greatly wrong in this. Chapter two details the case Flew built over the years against God, and chapter three traces the "various twists and turns" his philosophy took (p. 29).

The last seven chapters making up the second part ("My Discovery of the Divine") describe how Flew eventually changed his mind. Chapter 4 is entitled "A Pilgrimage of Reason." Flew puts to "my former fellow-atheists the simple central question: 'What would have to occur or to have occurred to constitute for you a reason for you to at least consider the existence of a superior mind?'" He answers: "I believe that this universe's intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God. I believe that life and reproduction originate in a divine Source. Why do I believe this, given that I expounded and defended atheism for more than a half century?" His reply: "The short answer is this: this is the world picture, as I see it, that has emerged from modern science" (p. 88). Flew now believes that science "spotlights" three "dimensions of nature that point to life." First, "nature obeys laws." The second is "the dimension of life, of intelligently organized and purpose-driven beings, who arose from matter." The third "is the very existence of nature." Flew further writes: "But it is not science alone that has guided me. I have also been helped by a renewed study of the classical philosophical arguments" (pp. 88–89). Flew informs us this movement was a gradual one leading to 2004 when he concluded "that the origin of life cannot be explained if you start with matter alone" (p. 90).

At the end of chapter four Flew says his "discovery of the Divine" was "on a purely natural level, without any reference to supernatural phenomena. It has been an exercise in what is traditionally called natural theology" (p. 93). However, if Flew truly understood "natural theology" it would lead him to God (Rom. 1:16–21), not to the "god" of Aristotle or deism. Here is where Flew makes his mistake, still coming up short in his thinking. He approvingly notes David Conway's correspondence between Aristotle's list of divine attributes—"immutability, immateriality, omnipotence, omniscience, oneness or indivisibility, perfect goodness, and necessary existence"—and "those traditionally ascribed to God within the Judaeo-Christian tradition" (p. 92). If he looked seriously at his recounting of Conway's argument, Flew would see his error that "natural theology" has nothing to do with any particular religion. In fact, it has everything to do with Christianity; the only revealed religion that is logically aligned to his—Flew's—new "belief system" is the Judeo-Christian religion (cf. Miethe and Flew, *Does God Exist?* pp. 40–63, 72–83, 127–37, 158, 195–98).

Chapter five is entitled "Who Wrote the Laws of Nature?" and is a discussion of the "most popular and intuitively plausible argument for God's existence," the teleological argument. Though Flew spent most of his life disagreeing with this argument, he now considers it "a persuasive case" for God's existence (p. 95). He further approves of

Paul Davies's point that "science can proceed only if the scientist adopts an essentially theological worldview" (p. 107). This chapter also has a subsection entitled "The Divine Lawmaker" in which Flew interacts with Richard Dawkins's notion that "God is too complex a solution for explaining the universe and its laws. According to Flew, "This strikes me as a bizarre thing to say about the concept of an omnipotent spiritual Being" (p. 111). The chapter ends with an impressive comment: "Those scientists who point to the Mind of God do not merely advance a series of arguments or a process of syllogistic reasoning. Rather, they propound a vision of reality that *emerges from the conceptual heart of modern science and imposes itself on the rational mind*. It is a vision that I personally find compelling and irrefutable" (p. 112; emphasis added). One wishes that Flew had read Whitehead and Lewis earlier in his life.

To the question posed in the title of the sixth chapter—"Did the Universe Know We Were Coming?"—Flew's answer is "yes!" In a subsection, "Our Finely Tuned Universe," Flew addresses the so-called "anthropic principle" (cf. Miethe and Habermas, *Why Believe? God Exists: Rethinking the Case for God and Christianity* [Joplin, MO: College Press, 1999], pp. 105–72) and "the theory of the multiverse." Flew agrees with Davies and Swinburne that this theory "explains everything and nothing" (p. 118), concluding the chapter with this statement: "So multiverse or not, we still have to come to terms with the origin of the laws of nature. And the only viable explanation here is the divine Mind" (p. 121).

To chapter seven's question "How Did Life Go Live?" Flew answers: "I maintained that there was no satisfactory naturalistic explanation for such a phenomenon" as the "almost unbelievable complexity" of DNA (p. 123). Furthermore, Flew believes that there is—as shown in modern science—too short a period for "abiogenesis" to have occurred. Writing about "The Purpose-Driven Organism," Flew says: "Let us first look at the nature of life from a philosophical standpoint. Living matter possesses an inherent goal or end-centered organization that is nowhere present in the matter that preceded it" (p. 124). In addition, he observes that "The origin of self-reproduction is a second key problem" needing explanation (p. 125). Moreover, "A third philosophical dimension of the origin of life relates to the origin of the coding and information processing that is central to all life-forms" (p. 126). All of this leads to his conclusion: "The only satisfactory explanation for the origin of such 'end-directed, self-replicating' life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind" (p. 132).

"Did Something Come from Nothing?" is chapter eight, featuring the subsection "Something Too Big for Science to Explain" in which Flew expresses "misgivings" about David Hume's methodology. He concludes that "a purely Humean story could not compass the established meanings of 'cause' and of 'law of nature'" (p. 139). Flew ends this chapter by saying "the universe is something that begs an explanation. Richard Swinburne's cosmological argument provides a very promising explanation, probably the finally right one" (p. 145).

Chapter nine is "Finding Space for God." Flew admits that there can be a person without a body. He refers to Brain Leftow, Nolloth Professor at Oxford, who "pointed out that the idea of God being outside space and time is consistent with the theory of special relativity" (p. 151). Flew admits, "At the very least, the studies of Tracy and Leftow show that the idea of an omnipresent Spirit is not intrinsically incoherent if we see such a Spirit as an agent outside space and time that uniquely executes its intentions in the spatio-temporal continuum." He agrees with Conway's conclusion that "there are no good philosophical arguments for denying God to be the explanation of the universe and of the form of order it exhibits" (pp. 153–54).

"Open to Omnipotence" is the tenth and brief last chapter. Flew starts by saying: "Science qua science cannot furnish an argument for God's existence. But the three items of evidence we have considered in this volume—the laws of nature, life with its

teleological organization, and the existence of the universe—can only be explained in the light of an Intelligence that explains both its own existence and that of the world. Such a discovery of the Divine does not come through experiments and equations, but through an understanding of the structures they unveil and map” (p. 154). He concludes with a short discussion of evil and suffering “which must be faced” and indicates he is “entirely open to learning more about the divine Reality.” Finally, “the question of whether the Divine has revealed itself in human history remains a valid topic of discussion” (pp. 156–57).

At the end of the book are two appendices by Roy Varghese entitled: “The ‘New Atheism’: A Critical Appraisal of Dawkins, Dennett, Wolpert, Harris, and Stenger” and “The Self-Revelation of God in Human History: A Dialogue on Jesus with N. T. Wright” (conducted with Flew). In my opinion, these two appendices are alone worth the price of the book.

In general, I find the book interesting and helpful and believe it will have a good impact on atheists who are open-minded and on theists who will learn from Flew’s journey. I would recommend it to a wide audience. One weakness is the relative brevity of the arguments, but this must be understood in view of the purpose of the book.

There are a couple of minor errors in the book (which I read from an “uncorrected proof” copy). Referring to his debates with Thomas Warren in 1976 and with Bill Craig in 1998, Flew says: “These two events were the only times in my life in which I served as one of two protagonists in a formal debate” (p. 67). He seems to have forgotten his public debate with Gary Habermas and me in 1985 in Virginia. Flew also says that Habermas was affiliated with “Lynchburg College in Virginia” (p. 70), which should be corrected to Liberty University.

I conclude with the following personal thoughts. On the first page of the book, Flew speaks of the announcement of his “‘conversion’ to deism.” In a *Christianity Today* article, Flew is referred to as being a “Jeffersonian Deist” (p. 80). This is not good news, as eighteenth-century deism has been unquestionably shown to be intellectually bankrupt. He writes further: “The God whose existence is defended by Conway and myself is the God of Aristotle” (p. 92); this, according to Conway, is impressively similar to God of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Again, the only God who does and can exist is absolutely the same as the revealed God of Christianity. Accordingly, I must say to my good friend Anthony Flew, because the god of the deists does not exist, if you are a deist, you are still an atheist. On the other hand, if the God of Aristotle—the God whom you now accept—truly has most of the characteristics of the Judaeo-Christian God, you are halfway there. Certainly, you have come a very long way, but you must still follow your reason—as did C. S. Lewis—and come fully and completely to embrace the triune God through Jesus Christ.

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Reading the Bible with the Dead: What You Can Learn from the History of Exegesis that You Can't Learn from Exegesis Alone. By John L. Thompson. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007, xi + 324 pp., \$20.00 paper.

“You don’t need dead theologians to tell you how to read your Bible!” exhorted my undergraduate chaplain during a conference for students who were leading campus Bible studies. While he no doubt had high regard for the Word’s self-interpreting power, his words betray both arrogance about the present and, most troubling, a low view of

God's work in church history. The irony is telling: while students should not listen to past pastors, they should certainly heed his expository preaching in chapel every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday! Being deprived of tradition is no testimony to Scripture's perspicuity. It is only a statement about one's mistrust of previous interpreters, the unintended consequence of which is that Scripture was less perspicuous in the past than it is at present. I can think of no real reason why today's Christians should not benefit from yesterday's, and it is unfortunate that so many have been told a high view of Scripture entails exactly this result. Of course, few serious evangelicals would deny the value of tradition. But our exegetical practice and our commentaries do not evince much interest in dead theologians, and the overblown rhetoric of zealous preachers like my college chaplain does not help matters.

In fact, there is already a consensus that evangelicalism is historically naïve, and a growing number of evangelicals are responding by urging a *freshad fontes* that looks to the church before the Reformation, particularly in its patristic period; this period is understood to be uniquely formative. Thomas Oden, seen as the initiator of the so-called "paleo-orthodoxy" movement, takes the ecumenical consensus of the early church as integral for accurate biblical interpretation. Whereas evangelical pastors emphasize present personal interpretation of Scripture, Oden urges us to turn first to our forefathers. He introduced his concerns in 1979 with his *Agenda for Theology* (New York: HarperCollins, 1979). His three-volume *Systematic Theology* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), which has seen several printings, has been important for showing evangelicals what they share with the ancient church. His two recent readers—*The Justification Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002); *The Good Works Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007)—are but the latest of his efforts; both surface similarities between patristic and Protestant doctrines of justification by grace through faith. Finally, as general editor, Oden has brought us IVP's Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series; this will soon have a sibling in the Reformation Commentary on Scripture.

Numerous evangelical scholars have joined this trend or formed similar movements. Christopher Hall penned *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1992), which is as much an introduction to early biblical interpretation as an exploration of what evangelicals can glean from the Fathers. The late Robert Webber believed that the prevalence of pluralism in both postmodern and ancient culture meant today's church needed to fortify its future by learning from the past. Thus his Ancient-Future series—*Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Post-modern World*; *Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community*; and *Ancient-Future Time: Forming Spirituality through the Christian Year* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999; 2003; and 2004, respectively). His project now boasts a study center (<http://www.aefcenter.org>) and growing support from evangelical leaders.

Many more examples could be produced, but the work of D. H. Williams deserves mention. His *Retrieving the Tradition and Renewing Evangelicalism: A Primer for Suspicious Protestants* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999) provided an apologia for evangelical engagement with the Church fathers. Presently, Williams is heading-up Baker's Evangelical Ressourcement: Ancient Sources for the Church's Future series, an evangelical echo of the twentieth century Catholic *ressourcement théologie* movement (antagonistically dubbed *la nouvelle théologie* by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange). This series hopes to stimulate an evangelical return to the patristic age. The first volume, authored by Williams (*Evangelicals and Tradition: The Formative Influence of the Early Church* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005]), argues among other things that Scripture and tradition belong together because the canon is but a product of the larger Christian theological tradition that the church constructed and recognized. The most recent addition to the series by Craig Allert—*A High View of Scripture? The Authority of the*

Bible and the Formation of the New Testament Canon (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007)—marks a direct challenge to the evangelical understanding of *sola scriptura* along these lines.

The thinkers mentioned above share a concern for a more historically informed and traditionally rooted evangelicalism. And while caution over caricaturing previous evangelical engagement is needed, the abundance of literature suggests that many feel the need for a corrective.

John L. Thompson, professor of historical theology and Gaylen and Susan Byker Professor of Reformed Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, is one such thinker, manifest by his being an advisor for the aforementioned Reformation Commentary on Scripture; he is slated to produce the *Genesis 1–11* volume in that series as well. In *Reading the Bible with the Dead*, Thompson hopes to demonstrate just how relevant the history of exegesis is. Rather than being a general argument, as the subtitle suggests, this book gives a concrete example of what pastors and exegetes stand to gain from an engagement with the history of interpretation. Thompson draws upon patristic, medieval, and Reformation commentaries on controversial issues or difficult biblical texts in order to aid the church as it wrestles with recent objections that Christianity is morally repugnant and that its Scriptures are ethically primitive, teaching inhumanity and superstitious violence. While so many have spoken about tradition's importance for theology in grandiose terms, few have actually provided specific examples of its significance. Herein lies Thompson's unique contribution.

Thompson examines the Church fathers' handling of nine controversial interpretive issues. Each chapter first establishes why contemporaries have raised concerns, then rehearses previous interaction, and finally concludes with reflections about the relationship between current and past interpretation and the value of the latter for the former. Thompson concludes that conversation with past commentators encourages us when we realize our harmony with the Fathers, strengthens the conclusions we hold in common, provokes us to self-examination when we find ourselves at odds with their positions and, most relevant to this work, teaches us that quandaries over difficult texts are "not necessarily the by-products of a degenerate modernity and its cultural accommodations" but something present throughout church history (p. 222). The general thesis is that the Fathers teach us how to read the Bible morally, something for which the grammatical-historical method—exegesis alone—is impotent. The Fathers force us to struggle with places where Scripture is silent on the ethical implications of its stories, a very helpful exercise given the present climate in which reading is ideology detection and so many are eager to point out where the Bible is either blind to or complicit in oppression and injustice. This is Thompson's response to my chaplain on why one should read one's Bible with dead theologians.

Chapter 1 considers Hagar in Genesis 16 and 21. Particularly disturbing is Abraham's mistreatment of Hagar and Ishmael when he sends them away with scant provisions. Hagar is not demeaned afresh by past commentators. Fathers like Didymus characterized Hagar as a symbol of wisdom. Others praised her for being the first to see God, one linking that fact with the beatitude, surmising she must have been pure in heart. Reformers like Martin Luther lamented Abraham's maltreatment of Hagar when he dispelled her from his care and argued that, being rejected by Abraham, she would have felt rejected by God. Thus, Thompson finds that "feminists are not really raising new questions about these passages" (p. 17) and that "worrying about injustice in the Bible is nothing new" (p. 30).

Chapter 2 treats Judges 11, Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter. Feminists have seen this as another instance of the dispensability of women in Scripture, for whereas Abraham's sacrifice of his son was halted by the divine hand, here God allows the killing

of a daughter. Far from being insensitive, Origen calls Jephthah's daughter a martyr, no small attribution given the early church's admiration of martyrs and the fact that Origen's father was martyred. Augustine admits the sinfulness of Jephthah, but deciphers two lessons intended by God: human sacrifice is unacceptable, and the daughter's sacrifice foreshadows Christ's. Both interpretations force us to recognize injustice in the Bible (even when it is silent about it) and provide ways of handling these unsettling silences.

Concerned that preachers preach the whole Bible, Thompson begins the next chapter mourning the selectivity of the Common Lectionary in filtering out "harsh" Psalms such as Psalm 137, which speaks of blissfully bashing Babylon's babies against rocks. To mention just one issue that receives attention in this chapter: How do we reconcile David's cursing of his enemies with the ethic of love for enemies taught by Christ, the Messiah who took up the mantle of David? David's cursing, responded Calvin, is not an example to be emulated, for the king was uniquely gifted with an office and divine insight. Calvin therefore believed that David could only denounce his enemies because he shared Christ's position as judge and possessed a gift of discernment that allowed him to curse enemies who were reprobate. The tradition thus teaches us both to be careful when applying the Psalms to our lives and to apply them even when we are disturbed by their severity.

The numerous failings of patriarchs are the subject of chapter 4. What of Abraham's lie that Sarah was his sister, for example? While some tried to rescue Abraham, many were honest; for example, Wolfgang Musculus wrote: "It's no work of faith to do what is unjust and dishonorable in order to obtain the promise of God" (p. 77). Thus, there is a healthy Christian tradition of not allowing admiration for godly leaders to lead to overlooking their sins. The church today should continue this approach, Thompson contends.

Chapter 5 reflects upon the "pornographic" imagery in Scripture, imagery that seems to enjoy too much the humiliation of women. Thompson sympathizes with feminist interpreters, writing that the problem is unintended consequences. Focusing primarily upon Gomer the prostitute, he observes that most of church history's exegetes were more at pains to protect Hosea from scandal than to read the text "through Gomer's eyes." They worried that Hosea could not have been a minister had he really married a harlot. Thompson is sensitive to both feminist fears and the Fathers' concerns, writing: "If [the Fathers] were accused of protecting male interests in this text, they would surely say that the issue is not protecting men, but protecting the ministry. That's a good thing to do, but the year this chapter was written regularly saw headlines decrying clergy sex abuse scandals;" thus, "when ministers are mostly male, protecting ministers or the ministry can easily look like protecting men" (p. 104). Ultimately, he concedes the feminists' point, but only because he believes he is on traditional ground: the Fathers' impulse to protect Hosea means they considered the moral implications of biblical texts. Responsible exegetes today, therefore, will be likewise mindful of the Bible's unintended effects, even as they distinguish them from its intent.

Female prophesying in 1 Corinthians 11 occupies Thompson in the sixth chapter; this continues his award-winning work on the relationship between patriarchalism and biblical interpretation. While feminism has made gender roles a current debate, Thompson discovers it is "nothing new to hesitate over [the] difficulties" (p. 114). Christianity's commentators may have failed to affirm the *imago Dei* in women and generally upheld male superiority, but they were not therefore dismissive of female ministry. Moreover, the Reformers like many today were aware of Paul's accommodation to cultural customs, taking some statements to be temporal advice on how to uphold decorum in the Corinthian church. This chapter's findings parallel those of chapter 8, which considers 1 Tim 2:12 and 1 Cor 14:34. In that chapter, Thompson argues that the

lack of consensus in church history about gender means Scripture's complexity is unavoidable. "Our own wrestling with these details is also traditional" (p. 182).

Divorce is covered in chapter 7. Thompson reminds us how important marriage was in the time of the Reformation; Reformers especially struggled with the issue of divorce, not least because of the politically motivated absolution of Philip of Hesse. Here again we are told of how previous commentators had difficulty harmonizing the Bible's teaching and focused more on developing a practical approach to the reality. Thus, we learn to minister whatever we take to be the biblical ideal with compassion and realism.

The final chapter considers sex and violence in the Bible with reference to Dinah, Bathsheba, Tamar, Lot's daughters, and the Levite's wife in Judges 19. As with Hagar and Tamar, we find that the Fathers were not quick to blame such events on the women, nor were they unconcerned about their suffering. In the case of Tamar, Calvin, for example, reckons partial blame to David, seeing the incident as a byproduct of David's adultery and arguing that David should have been a better father to his children. Thompson stresses that these past commentators did not ignore sexual violence in the Bible; thus, we do not take the Bible seriously when we do so today. Furthermore, the historic exegesis prompts us to glean moral lessons from the Bible even where there is no explicit teaching.

One of the unfortunate oversights of those who wish to reconnect evangelicalism with the past is that they tend to sidestep the cultural, political, philosophical, hermeneutical, and even theological differences between the Fathers and today's theologians (on this, see my criticism of Kevin Giles in my review of his *Jesus and the Father: Modern Evangelicals Reinvent the Doctrine of the Trinity, Christian Scholar's Review* 37 [2007] 122–25). There is too quick a movement from past to present. With respect to Thompson's work, is it not slightly anachronistic to think of the Fathers' interpretations in terms of contemporary feminism, for example? Certainly Thompson is right to say that the church has wrestled with our questions before us, but the differences that would distinguish our answers from theirs ought to be fully disclosed. Otherwise, we keep the church's understanding shallow and facilitate a naïve reading of the texts we so want it to enjoy.

This point should not diminish Thompson's contributions that are many and important. Apart from providing the current effort to recover tradition with specific examples (mentioned above), Thompson also shows that reading Scripture exegetically has historically included reading them ethically. Commentary is not just navigating grammar and argument, but addressing moral issues raised by a text whether explicitly answered or not. Accordingly, his book has something to say to the theological interpretation of Scripture. Thompson also secures warrant for meeting rather than retreating from interest-group interpretations. On Thompson's account, the Fathers were just as sensitive to the problems that feminists and others encounter. Churchly reading of Scripture, therefore, does not mean ignoring ethically curious portions in order to focus on salvation-history or even the explicit teaching; rather it means attending to all of Scripture's implications, both stated and those that arise from its silence or apparent approval of evil. But "liberals" are equally guilty here. Whereas "conservatives" may cavalierly dismiss feminists' concerns, "liberals" simply edit out passages they cannot stomach (as Thompson regularly finds in the lectionary's omissions). If the Fathers teach "conservatives" to struggle with all manner of injustice in Scripture, they teach "liberals" to search for canonical and theological responses. "Conservatives" and "liberals" thus need a deeper commitment to Scripture, one that allows them to *fully* engage the *whole* Bible. Furthermore, pastors who are tempted to follow the lectionary and neglect difficult texts can benefit from Thompson's study. They may come across satisfying responses or, at least, be encouraged to preach a troublesome text by the fact that previous pastors were perplexed and yet still engaged rather than ignored

these passages. In fact, Thompson has developed a website to help preachers which presently has five audio sermons by Thompson on texts discussed in this book (http://www.fuller.edu/sot/faculty/thompson_john/HistExeg). Finally, it should be noted that in the process of showing the contemporary value of the history of interpretation, Thompson redresses the complaints of feminists and others who would charge the historic church with complicity in the Bible's alleged errors. And here Thompson furthers his own original project (see his pioneering *Writing the Wrongs: Women of the Old Testament among Biblical Commentators from Philo through the Reformation* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001]).

When these benefits are combined with the very helpful glossary of past biblical commentators and the catalogue of English translations of historic commentaries (updated on the aforementioned website) included at the end of the book, *Reading the Bible with the Dead* becomes a tremendous resource. I urge all students, preachers, counselors, exegetes, theologians, and church historians to read this book.

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Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama. By Michael S. Horton. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2002, vii + 351 pp., \$29.95 paper. *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology*. By Michael S. Horton. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005, xiv + 282 pp., \$29.95 paper.

Michael Horton's first two books of his trilogy qualify as learned, courageous, often insightful contributions to theological scholarship. Horton has always been a prolific author. With these works, though, he has fully engaged the academic arena, which is no more significant but is, in some ways, both broader and deeper. Indeed, *Covenant and Eschatology* engages simultaneously post-Nietzschean thought and the "narrative theology" often associated with Yale, while *Lord and Servant* continues ranging widely, from Paul Tillich to open theism to N. T. Wright and beyond.

The first book, *Covenant and Eschatology: The Divine Drama*, constitutes "the beginning of an attempt at a theological project—more specifically, an attempt to integrate biblical theology and systematic theology on the basis of scripture's own intra-systematic categories of covenant and eschatology" (p. 1). This attempt incorporates a *method* labeled "redemptive-historical" or "eschatological," a *mode* labeled "analogical," and a *model* labeled "dramatic," all in the *context* of "covenant" theology.

None of these elements, on their own, should be considered unique. Fifteen years ago, Richard Lints contributed *The Fabric of Theology*; as the subtitle suggests, this was designed to be *A Prolegomenon to Evangelical Theology*. Lints's proposal was decisively oriented to biblical theology, with a strongly "redemptive-historical" construal of that project; Lints also interacted to some degree with the "Yale School." Moreover, a dozen years ago, Brian Ingrassia wrote *Postmodern Theory and Biblical Theology*, defending the Christian faith against postmodern masters of suspicion. Appealing like Horton to the difference between Paul and Plato, Ingrassia claimed that when "onto-theology" (understanding God via Greek or Western philosophical categories such as "being") is deconstructed, Christians should stand up and cheer—indeed, we should have been counted against the onto-God, and in favor of biblical theology, long before.

If Horton's redemptive-historical method is not that unique, then neither of course is the "analogical" mode. The idea is thoroughly traditional, at least since the Middle Ages, that statements about God are neither "univocal" (i.e. they are not saying exactly

the same thing about God that the language would say about humans) nor “equivocal” (i.e. they are not saying exactly nothing about God that the language would say about humans). Moreover, a “dramatic” model is now all the rage, the mid-twentieth century Roman Catholic theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar’s five-volume *Theodrama* having ignited among theologians a fervent interest in aesthetics. Several “drama” projects have recently been undertaken, notably Kevin Vanhoozer’s *The Drama of Doctrine*. Likewise, a “covenant” context appeals to an established theological tradition; its post-Reformation federalist versions, however, are not particularly popular, which is Horton’s point. Hoping to integrate the aforementioned categories in a unique configuration, he attempts to rehabilitate the Protestant scholastics. His goal is not to “repristiniate” their “achievements,” but to “harvest some . . . basic insights in an effort to engage . . . contemporary conversations” (p. 3), especially with postliberal or narrative theologians who might be kissing cousins instead of sibling rivals or black sheep.

Horton’s end result is a definition of theology as “the church’s reflection on God’s performative action in word and deed and its own participation in the drama of redemption” (p. 276). Along the way, the book abounds with doublets—neither this nor that, but middle ways. Such a strategy often makes for insightful combinations and challenging critiques, though occasionally something curious or perhaps just cute (e.g. “nonfoundationalist foundation”) is to be found. Besides doublets the book simply abounds with prose, densely packed with a relatively small font into 276 pages, before another 52 pages of endnotes.

If I were to lodge a few complaints about this first volume, density would be the first, because following the overall flow, and focusing on the forest rather than the trees, can sometimes be difficult. Second, for all the detail, difficult problems that seem material to the thesis are sometimes not discussed. For example, I remain unsure about the function of the aforementioned “nonfoundationalist foundation” (p. 106). If the incarnation and resurrection of Christ function as the universal truths on which all true knowledge is based, they seem to function foundationally. If “foundationalism” is then denied, would Horton appeal instead to the “Reformed epistemology” of Plantinga and Wolterstorff, the presuppositionalism of Van Til (hints of which I detect, e.g., on page 76), or blatant fideism (which would belie his serious cultural engagement)? Almost no one wants to be a foundationalist right now, and depending on what sort of foundationalism is under discussion, neither do I. At minimum, however, a paragraph or a footnote acknowledging the complexity of that issue would help to clarify and counter charges of special pleading.

For another example, Horton criticizes Carl F. H. Henry for preferring a univocal view of language and proclaiming that analogy would give us no genuine knowledge of God (pp. 187–89). Henry may be criticized rightly, but Horton’s constant appeals to analogy never allude to its philosophical treatment. Discussion of analogy’s different types has raised questions about its epistemic viability for theological language, so Henry is not alone in his concern. Even if Horton eschews defining analogical language according to a particular philosophical type, the reader at least deserves acknowledgment that an intellectual move of some consequence has been made.

This leads to my third and probably most serious complaint. The core and potential genius of *Covenant and Eschatology* does not lie in the drama analogy, which is put to use only sparingly (except that the concluding chapter touches on its liturgical implications). From the outset, it seemed that the book’s promise lay in returning the Protestant scholastics at least to theology’s stage, perhaps to a leading role. If indeed *they* held together a redemptive-historical approach to Scripture, analogical language, eschatological humility, and attention to covenant, then *their* texts should help to script our present-day speaking parts. But the scholastic genius is basically asserted, not argued. And Horton fails to model his preferred mode of engagement with these

scholastic predecessors. John Calvin and Geerhardus Vos are frequently cited, but not Francis Turretin, for instance; arguably this leaves out the very time period in question. Furthermore, should we harvest themes from these forbearers—redemptive-history, archetype/ectype, covenant, etc.—which we then understand and use on our own (perhaps biblical) terms? Or should we hang on to the scholastic configurations of said themes? That choice might make all the difference for Horton's reception by many outside his tradition.

Not only am I unclear about *how* we should rehabilitate the scholastics; many remain unclear about *whether* we should. Ellen Charry is somewhat typical of those who distinguish them from their predecessors. She avers that the scholastics failed to see that "for Calvin, theology is a first-order pastoral undertaking, not a second-order academic discipline." Reformed scholasticism was an attempt to meet an "epistemic crisis" by moving "from immediate knowledge of God to knowledge of God mediated through Scripture . . . to enable theology to position itself to engage both fronts at once." The effort was, however, a huge failure: Theology has retreated from both fronts, becoming "emotionally inaccessible to believers and academically unacceptable to the wider academy" (Ellen T. Charry, "To What End Knowledge? The Academic Captivity of the Church," in *Theology in the Service of the Church*, ed. William M. Alston, Jr. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000] 76, 79, 83). If Charry (at least partially) lays this modern condition at scholasticism's feet, then whatever its merits, William Abraham's *Canon and Criterion in Christian Theology* has placed the blame even farther back, at the feet of Luther and Calvin themselves. He alleges that Luther's scriptural clarity and Calvin's internal witness of the Holy Spirit were foundations (in the epistemological sense) that paved the way for parallels in Descartes as well as their scholastic successors. Yet such charges go unanswered in Horton's book.

Granted, Richard Muller and others are busy producing responsible history on the period, which might parry the more grandiose metanarratives of "modernity." Besides, answering the above charges would thicken Horton's already overcrowded book. Yet, notwithstanding a few qualifiers such as "for the most part" (p. 3) and "generally speaking" (p. 85), when Horton treats the scholastic legacy, we get no satisfaction. If *Covenant and Eschatology* contends "that conservative evangelical theologies represent 'turgid scholasticism' not when they rely on the Protestant scholastics, but precisely to the extent that they abandon or (as is more frequently the case) ignore them" (p. 2), then is not at least a brief acknowledgment of the historical challenges appropriate? Until someone gives narrative and postliberal theologians good reason, will they be inclined to configure a "covenant" theology more on the style and substance of the scholastics? We might plausibly have our doubts.

So then, how well does Horton's neo-covenantal approach to contemporary theology play out in the second book, *Lord and Servant: A Covenant Christology*? If one expects to find a fairly standard Christology, then one will experience surprise and disappointment. Part One, "Lord," is a sort of miniature doctrine of God, while Part Two, "Servant," follows with anthropology in light of creation (chapter four, "'Here I Am': A Covenantal Anthropology") and the fall into sin (chapter five, "'Adam, Where Are You?': Trial of the Covenant Servant"). Not until Part Three, "Lord and Servant," do we read Christology properly so-called. Nevertheless, this book seems to do a slightly better job of acknowledging historical issues concerning Reformed scholasticism, and much of it flows more readably with proper density.

The introduction leads off by reaffirming the importance of the covenant concept for Horton's project. I am unsure whether it is correct that, according to "the widely held consensus among ancient Near Eastern scholars . . . a distinction between conditional and unconditional covenants exists and can be correlated with the Sinai covenant and the Abrahamic, Davidic, and new covenants, respectively" (p. x). Horton seems

to treat the classic two-covenant model (covenant of works, covenant of grace) as more of a given than non-covenantal or recent one-covenant models might allow.

In any case, chapter one ("Meeting a Stranger: A Covenantal Prolegomenon") introduces covenant theology as a mediating motif between what Tillich called "ontological" and "cosmological" approaches to religion. The former, "overcoming estrangement" or hyper-immanence, holds that "we come to ourselves when we come to God" (p. 4) and might be associated with Schleiermacher or Bultmann, for example. The latter, ending up according to Horton with "a stranger we never meet" or hyper-transcendence, therefore denies access to the (religious) other and might be associated with Kant, Derrida, and critiques of ontotheology. We need, instead, to see "meeting a stranger" as an ethical enterprise, only possible if God should come *toward us* with covenant as the meeting site (and without ontological union). Whereas "postmodern thought has reminded us quite truly that 'under the sun,' we are in the desert" (p. 20), God's incarnation in Jesus Christ leads to a covenant epistemology of archetypal/ectypal theology and accordingly our invocation of the divine name.

Chapter two, "Strong Verbs: A God with Character," selectively applies the covenantal model to some current debates within theology proper. Against various versions of panentheism, Reformed theology more helpfully rejects beginning with "our idea of perfect being, in a way of either eminence or negation," than does a Thomist model (p. 29). Yet in light of biblical theology, we need to portray God more dynamically and actively in relation to creation than have many in the past; the God of Israel unifies the absolute and the personal (p. 33). Still, contra Jürgen Moltmann and others, "God enters into covenants rather than being constituted in his very being by them" (p. 35). Open theists and their biblical portrayals of divine action, also come in for criticism: "I have yet to discover among open theists an argument in favor for God's rage being understood in the same univocal terms as his repentance" (p. 39). Horton follows Vanhoozer in calling for a Reformed theism that is explicated more in terms of divine communicative action than causality, with a possible parallel in particular between understandings of divine impassibility and Jesus' impeccability (p. 45). Horton is not afraid to criticize Reformed luminaries such as Jonathan Edwards along the way because, for example, his tradition has sometimes failed to account adequately for the importance of secondary causes (p. 54). Chapter three ("A Glorious Theater: Triune Lordship in Eternity, Nature, and History") concludes Part One by further applying contemporary Trinitarian theology to the God-world relation.

Part Two begins in chapter four by exploring the image of God in relation to questions about the postmodern self. Horton rightly sees that "the importance of the *imago Dei* concept in Scripture will be determined by corollaries or constituent aspects of the image rather than direct statements concerning the image as such" (p. 108 n. 59), relatively sparse and Spartan as those are. Horton highlights their biblical connection to the theme of glory, and also the motif of "here I am"—the relational and praxis-oriented self responding to God's call. The extra-theological resources here, such as Calvin Schrag and Paul Ricoeur, are judiciously appropriated. Chapter five follows with a contemporary reaffirmation that humans have failed to keep God's covenant of works.

As *Lord and Servant* transitions into a focus on Christology, Horton rejects both "from above" and "from below" strategies as non-covenantal (p. 160). Chapter six, "The Lord as Servant," engages in dialogue with Robert Jenson, among others, while ultimately affirming the approach of Reformed scholastics. Focusing upon the person of Jesus Christ in a way that affirms his full humanity is important, lest either "Alexandrian" or "Antiochene" (note the scare quotes) tendencies should "lodge the salvific significance of Jesus in his deity: either a divinized humanity or a divine nature as opposed to a human nature" (p. 166). Horton worries that most orthodox, non-Reformed approaches only seem to affirm the *communicatio idiomatum* moving in one

direction, from divine to human. Meanwhile, “the Reformed emphasis on the active obedience reconciles the Greek emphasis on recapitulation and incarnation and the Latin emphasis on the cross. The person, life, and work of Christ is not therefore saving simply because of his divinity (whether referred to a divine nature or a divinized humanity), but because of both natures united in one hypostasis” (p. 173). Accordingly, “it is not via kenotic christologies but via a theology of divine accommodation that we are able to uphold the two natures of Christ in one person” (p. 177).

Chapter seven, “Suffering Servant,” consistently applies this approach to “Challenges to Sacrificial Atonement.” René Girard, radical feminism, and some Anabaptist sources such as J. Denny Weaver provide the political challenges to which Horton capably responds, with appeals to both Karl Barth and Miroslav Volf in addition to his own tradition. Theologies of ontological participation also tend to challenge substitutionary views of atonement, as do for example John Milbank (of “Radical Orthodoxy” fame) and Jenson. Once again, Horton responds charitably, with constructive but telling criticisms in addition to sensitive restatements of his Reformed position.

The last two chapters unfold in traditional Reformed terms: “Prophet and Priest” in chapter eight and “King of Glory: The Servant Who Is Lord” in chapter nine. Horton begins his discussion of Christ’s prophetic ministry by seeing it—and not just the priestly ministry—in mediatorial terms. For “mediation is not only sacrificial but apocalyptic” (p. 209); “the prophet mediates the age to come in this present age” (p. 210). If a focus on drama per se is relatively absent from these books, still this is one example of Horton’s eschatological concern making its presence felt. These chapters are especially thick with citations of Scripture, and less thick with footnotes citing other scholars. They present readable Reformed biblical theology, yet with contemporary awareness. Horton seems particularly interested to highlight the humanity of Christ as a distinctive Reformed contribution that can help us move beyond many a current theological conundrum. In this connection, he reminds us that the terminology of Christ’s “passive” as opposed to “active” obedience is unfortunate, because all of Jesus’ obedience—and surely not least his passion—was dramatically active indeed.

My potential criticisms are chiefly two. First, already mentioned is the ease with which the traditional Reformed covenantal scheme—the covenant of redemption, and then the covenants of works and of grace—is assumed as biblical theology and related to others such as Augustine (e.g., p. xi n. 16). Second, Horton’s handling of divine attributes in relation to Trinitarian theology seems questionable on occasion. Yes, divine simplicity would prevent us from singling out a favorite attribute such as God’s love and privileging it in unhealthy ways (p. 55). But that does not quite settle the question of whether love characterizes the divine being, given God’s Triune identity, in singularly distinctive ways. And, whereas Horton rightly criticizes Barth for confusing creation itself with redemption, it is not clear to me why he follows Barth in the first place regarding the equation of grace with mercy (pp. 58–59). Why should we see divine condescension in the gift of creation apart from grace, indeed apart from the self-giving of the Triune God? Does this not confuse us by removing any ability even to distinguish grace and mercy? More careful consideration of divine attributes in light of the immanent versus the economic Trinity seems necessary, in connection with biblical exposition of the Christocentric meaning of grace.

Despite a few weaknesses, in my judgment Horton’s project contains the potential for important contributions to the American evangelical future. The first two stem especially from *Covenant and Eschatology* with its interest in theological method.

First, Horton consistently emphasizes divine action as he seeks to integrate perceived opposites such as word and act. An emerging movement (increasingly named “theological interpretation of Scripture”) is concerned that we stop eclipsing God’s communicative power behind excessive preoccupation with human action. Against coming

to the Bible with exclusive reliance upon either scholarly methods or Christian spiritualities, Horton clearly voices such a concern as a Reformed evangelical.

Second, we desperately need American Christians to heed Horton's call for epistemic humility by way of eschatology—a subject that has ironically become exhibit A that we lack humility! My students are amazed when they read St. Augustine or other ancients, to discover their modesty in making theological claims, especially about God *in se*. By contrast, American pretensions to “objective” or even “absolute” truth frequently trade on naïve realism, assuming not only that our language about God is univocal but that our knowledge of the divine Word is unerring. While we should not abandon Scripture's trustworthiness, only half the battle is won in defending it. Horton's work can advance us on our weak front—responsible theological hermeneutics—by marshaling resources for epistemic humility from within the Christian tradition, instead of surrendering churchgoers to the all-or-nothing demands of either skepticism or absolutism.

In general, Horton makes a third contribution toward re-socializing Christian communities: here a committed representative of evangelicals' Reformed wing puts its best foot forward, willing to tango—usually without trying to step on someone else's toes. This open-handed conversational style has already brought criticism from Horton's right. And it must be admitted that *Covenant and Eschatology* does criticize others, especially Pentecostals, in a few places. But overall the tone of these books is one of generous conviction, treating others' ideas—evangelical and non-evangelical—as if they matter.

And ideas do matter. If, with Horton, more of us took cultural concerns and theological traditions seriously, especially the genius of the Reformed tradition—its commitment to divine action in and alongside Scripture, plus its conviction about the properly humble, Christ-centered, expectant character of human knowing—then the truly “evangelical” drama might play out more appealingly. Much of the Scripture-soaked *Lord and Servant*, having more than fulfilled the promise of its methodological predecessor, will therefore be a refreshing read for evangelical theologians, whatever their tradition.

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Restoring the Reformation: British Evangelicalism and the Francophone 'Réveil' 1816–1849. By Kenneth J. Stewart. Bletchley, UK: Paternoster, 2006, xvi + 281 pp., \$36.99 paper.

This important study of the nineteenth-century *Réveil* (awakening) in French-speaking Switzerland and France chronicles a chapter in evangelical history that has long needed to be told more fully. As the title suggests, the volume focuses not only on Francophone awakening developments associated with figures of lasting importance such as Louis Gaussen, Merle D'Aubigne, and the Monod brothers (Frédéric, Guillaume, and Adolphe), but also on the cross-channel connections between the British evangelicals such as Robert Haldane and the *Réveil* as it emerged in Geneva and elsewhere. While at numerous points the author demonstrates that British influences were important and that British financial resources were sometimes decisive, he also effectively rebuts the popular view of the *Réveil* as largely resulting from the work of the idiosyncratic Scot Robert Haldane. While Haldane did spend time in Geneva and gathered a group of students about him, the *Réveil* cannot be understood apart from the work of many others and from other influences such as Moravian pietism.

The book consists of four lengthy chapters followed by a brief conclusion and five appendices. An extensive bibliography and a useful index are appended. In its structure,

depth of detail, and technicality the book betrays its origins as an Edinburgh dissertation, but it richly rewards careful study and will be an essential resource for further study on the topic.

In the first chapter, Stewart explores the legacy of the eighteenth-century revival of evangelical religion in England and Scotland. He notes that this awakening was a moderate Calvinist enterprise, emphasizing human depravity, the cross of Christ, God's sovereign mercy to the elect, and the preserving grace of God, as well as a tendency toward biblicism and a disaffection with creeds as a means of maintaining theological orthodoxy (pp. 14–15). Also explored is the emergence in the late eighteenth century of pan-evangelicalism in Britain—the web of formal and informal ties that bound various evangelical Christians together in the common causes of evangelism through itinerant ministry, the training of Christian workers, literacy, education, and social action. Throughout this first chapter, Stewart also seeks to answer the question of why this evangelical revival tended to benefit nonconformity rather than the established churches of Britain. His answer focuses on practical issues—faced with the needs of a rapidly increasing Industrial Revolution-era population, the state churches were limited by a shortage of church buildings and preachers, and the Dissenters, with their itinerant preachers, were more flexible and culturally closer to the middle and working classes.

The second chapter treats French-speaking Protestantism from the revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) until the emergence of the *Réveil*. French Protestantism during this period was hobbled by the rationalism that dominated Genevan theological education and by the massive emigration of Protestants from France. Under these difficult circumstances, Stewart notes that Moravian conventicles were instrumental in fostering evangelical piety in both Geneva and in France. Only at this point does the author examine the role of Robert Haldane, who came to Geneva in 1816 and began to teach and shepherd a group of theological students there. But Haldane was not alone; others, such as the American Associate Reformed pioneer of theological education John Mitchell Mason, were involved in similar labors in Geneva. Haldane, Stewart argues, was distinguished from others by his sectarian distrust of the institutional church, by his biblicism (his view of inspiration was to influence Gaussen), and by his restorationist desire to recover the apostolic church.

The third chapter describes the Genevan awakening and its larger impact on Francophone Europe. Geneva's "position of precedence" in the Reformed world helped to facilitate the spread of the *Réveil* (p. 91). Conceding that the "greatest initial impulse" for the *Réveil* came from the nonconformist Bourg-de-Four congregation in Geneva (p. 101), and that much of the evangelism undertaken from Geneva was done by Dissenters (p. 107), Stewart nevertheless argues that the *Réveil* "did not have an intrinsically separatist impulse" (p. 93). He notes that many of Haldane's students did not leave the state church, and that the Pietistic strategy focused on reforming the church from within by the use of conventicles. He also suggests that the tendency toward separation stemmed from the harsh reaction from the Genevan Company of Pastors to the *Réveil*. Nevertheless, the trend toward nonconformity continued with the formation of the Genevan Evangelical Society in 1831 and the uniting of dissident congregations together with some from state church congregations to form the Église Évangélique Libre de Genève in 1849, a body that allowed liberty on questions of baptism and lay participation (p. 110). This trend toward nonconformity was then replicated in other French-speaking areas of Europe and in France itself as the message was spread through the work of various para-church organizations (p. 120); Stewart concedes that these efforts "ultimately served the interests of ecclesiastical independence" (p. 124). The theology of the *Réveil* was basically repristinationist. The *Réveil* figures, Stewart notes, were "far happier in emphasizing the abiding truths of the older

orthodoxy than in engaging in creative theological writing from the nineteenth century" (p. 141). In essence, the *Réveil* theology was not markedly different from the older British and American evangelical Calvinism, albeit with a strong conversionist piety.

The fourth and fifth chapters focus on British response to and involvement in the *Réveil*. Here Stewart argues that the patterns of influence went both ways, and he cites three examples of *Réveil* influence upon British evangelicals. First, César Malan, who was compared by contemporaries with George Whitefield, showed that evangelism conducted under Calvinistic auspices was still viable, even in the age of Charles Finney. Second, Louis Gaussen influenced the view of biblical inspiration held by later English evangelicals such as C. H. Spurgeon. In his often-reprinted *Theopneustia*, Gaussen argued in opposition to German critical scholarship that all parts of Scripture are inspired in the same way. Stewart suggests that Gaussen departed from the "degrees of inspiration" model then popular that sought to do justice to the human dimension of Scripture. Finally, the considerable engagement of *Réveil* figures in ecumenical activity is noted. For example, church historian Merle D'Aubigne called for a pan-Protestant confession of faith that would unite evangelicals around the essentials of orthodoxy, and *Réveil* figures were deeply involved in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance in 1846. Here Stewart insightfully remarks that the men of the *Réveil* found an "alternate, international unity to replace an unsatisfactory ecclesiastical unity which they believed to have failed them" (p. 227).

This volume is an example of careful, perceptive, and wide-ranging historical analysis. But why should thoughtful, contemporary evangelicals read it? At least two comments are in order. As noted, Stewart goes to some lengths to argue that the *Réveil* impulse was not intrinsically sectarian. Repeatedly he contends that the tendency toward nonconformity and outright independency was an accident of historical circumstances rather than something specific to the ideology of the *Réveil* and, by extension, to the larger evangelical movement. But the evidence marshaled by Stewart could just as easily, and perhaps more plausibly, suggest that many of the *Réveil* figures were largely indifferent to ecclesial concerns. It seems that they were willing to work within ecclesial frameworks when it was convenient, and that they were quite happy to jettison churchly connections when it suited them. In short, was the *Réveil* just as "ecclesio-logically challenged" as much contemporary evangelicalism and, if so, does this have much to do with the style of individualistic and conversionist piety embraced by both the *Réveil* and by much modern evangelicalism? This is a matter of some contemporary import, for conservative Reformed evangelicalism today seems increasingly divided between what may be termed "theocentrics" (those who emphasize the majesty of God and his sovereignty in the salvation of individual sinners) and "ecclesials" (those who, while not indifferent to the importance of divine sovereignty, are concerned to recover a viable doctrine of the church). Stewart's study implicitly reminds us that the tension in Reformed circles between churchly and conversionist pieties is nothing new.

Second, does a study of the *Réveil* alert us to other weaknesses in contemporary evangelicalism? Stewart's conclusion ends on a depressing note—that efforts to further the *Réveil* led only to the establishment of "minority evangelical cultures in a progressively secularizing Europe," and that Britain itself was not far behind (p. 227). Although Stewart's book is more an exercise in church history than historical theology, his description of *Réveil* theology suggests that the Francophone awakening did not have a great deal to say to the broader European culture of its day. Likewise, contemporary evangelicalism should beware of an irrelevance borne of a satisfaction with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century answers to twenty-first century questions.

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Barth for Armchair Theologians. By John R. Franke and Ron Hill. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006, 183 pp., \$16.95 paper.

Though John Franke may be more widely known for his work in fostering theological dialogue and reimagining the theological task within postmodern and emergent frameworks, he is no stranger to Barth studies. He not only lectures on Barth as Professor of Theology at Biblical Theological Seminary in Hatfield, Pennsylvania, but he has also authored several articles and done several lectureships on various aspects of Barth's thought. His *Beginning Again: Karl Barth, Postmodernity, and the Task of Theology* is likewise anticipated from Eerdmans in the near future. His current survey of Barth for the *Armchair Theologians* series joins companion volumes by other reputable scholars on Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, the Reformation, and Wesley.

By way of an immediate assessment, Franke has provided an excellent primer to Karl Barth that requires only the most basic knowledge of theological argot, but without being immoderately reductionistic—no mean feat given that the book covers both Barth's biography and theology in a scant 183 pages. As one might expect from the title, those with serious Barth interests need not read this sketch but should instead consult the substantive works of George Hunsinger, John Webster, Eberhard Busch, and the like—or, better yet, the *Dogmatics* themselves. But this is no critique. Franke and the *Armchair Theologians* series have executed well what they set out to do: map out a navigable on-ramp to the Barthian highway for the student driver.

Franke uses a biographical structure by which to explore Barth's thought. Barth's theology is presented heuristically as it developed over the course of his life, his various works being discussed at the place and time of publication. Beginning in the first chapter with Barth's flight from conservative pietism and his early love affair with Protestant liberalism, Franke takes the opportunity to provide brief outlines of Schleiermacher, Ritschel, and the modern mood that nursed Barth's theological infancy. The second chapter continues the biographical development, discussing the "red" pastor's socialist influences. From his pastoral struggles and disillusionment with liberal theology in the Great War, we join Barth in his search for a new way of performing the theological task. Chapter three is primarily a survey of the Romans commentary and Barth's arrival at his bedrock position—that is, the primacy of the divine over the human centered in Christ. Barth leaves the pastorate in Safenwil for the classroom in Göttingen in chapter four. One of Barth's most infamous monikers—the impossible possibility—makes its entrance here with the problem of theological language and the abortive Göttingen dogmatics. Chapter five takes Barth to Münster, where he dialogues with Roman Catholics, then on to Bonn and the start of the *Church Dogmatics*, and finally back to Switzerland to oppose Nazism. The sixth chapter consists entirely of a survey of the *Dogmatics*. While this is the longest chapter in the book, the reader may still be left desiring more detail. Given the sort of book this is, however, such a comment is probably unavoidable. Chapter seven is given over to consideration of Barth's legacy. Franke outlines several "reads" of Barth—namely, the Neo-Orthodox Barth and the Postmodern Barth—and critiques them in favor of the fully-dialectical Barth (a move this reviewer applauds). The book is lightly footnoted and contains a well-weighed next-step bibliography of primary and secondary material for those who wish to wade more deeply into the Barthian stream of consciousness.

Franke's writing is lucid and approachable throughout and would be hard to improve. Given the constraints of such a dwarfish volume on such a gigantic subject, it would be sheer folly to call the things that were left out "flaws." They are simply editorial inevitabilities. But it might be useful to the prospective reader to be aware of some of the things that either did not or could not find their way into the book. Despite Franke's frequent affirmation of Barth's "dialectic" methods, the book rather assumes that

one knows what this troublesome word precisely means. It is used sufficiently in context for the novice to guess, but thinking back on my initial encounter with Barth many years ago, my first hurdle was simply the attempt to understand what “dialectical” means and how it could possibly constitute coherent thought. The word is so ubiquitous in Barth studies that its foreignness to the average person is often forgotten. The point: be sure to spend a moment in a theological dictionary appropriating a basic knowledge of this concept before picking up even *this* book. In addition, with the exception of the Schleiermacher/Ritchel overview, Franke tends to focus more on Barth’s sociological context than on his theological one. For example half of chapter five is given over to Barth’s confrontation with Hitler and Nazism, but his much more theologically significant battle with Brunner over natural knowledge of God passes without mention.

And this brings me to the only observation that might pass for a real critique, and even this in the hands of another reviewer might be considered a virtue. Overall, Franke has given us the sterling silver Barth and left aside all the tarnish. Nowhere in the book does the reader encounter the truly controversial theologian. The impression left is that for some unclear reason Barth was a bit scandalous in his day, bravely standing against outmoded liberalism and closed-minded conservatism, but none of that concerns us now. We, says the subtext, can look back on Barth as an exemplar of *semper reformanda*—simply reimagining Christianity for his cultural context—while recognizing that it is always an unfinished and provisional task to be taken up anew by each generation. And there is certainly a sense that this is true (both of Barth and in the absolute), but it needs a number of qualifications.

First, despite Barth’s often gracious allowances for his theological antagonists and his own humility about his theological legacy, he did after all believe himself to be right—not just one of many possible contextual theologies. His monosyllabic retort to Brunner (“*Nein!*”) is sufficient evidence to remind us that Barth believed that his approach to theology was the only viable method, and that not only Protestant liberalism but the “older dogmaticians” too produced innumerable errors and problems precisely from not embracing something akin to his theological assumptions. Second, an unqualified presentation of Barth as saintly reformer of the tradition disregards many of the heterodoxical conclusions Barth reached. Certainly his exegesis of Genesis 1:2 or Romans 1 are *sui generis* in the history of the church. One could also mention Barth’s tweaking of the *logos asarkos*, his probable universalism, his “shadowy-side” of the good creation (*die Schattenseite*), and his often-suspicious pigeonholing methods of historical research. (e.g., Calvin may still be tossing uncomfortably at being “*semper reformand-ed*” into a pre-Barthian.) And after all, the occasional excoriating critiques of Berkouwer and Van Til were certainly generated by *something*. In the end, of course, Barth may be right and the tradition wrong on any or all of these issues, but given the controversy that has surrounded them, a mention is certainly appropriate. Finally, Barth had some social blemishes that pass under the radar of this book. He has been perennially critiqued by feminist and other social constituencies for his uninformed sociological ponderings (particularly later in life). And his relationship with his long-term secretary Charlotte von Kirschbaum seems to have been at least as significant to him as his marriage (tabloid issues aside, she probably deserved some credit for her work on the *Dogmatics*).

Now in one sense, Franke is to be praised for leaving aside much of this back-fence talk. After all, this is an *introduction* to Barth and ought to have a legitimate ring of objectivity (which it does), and our current theological milieu certainly delights more in highlighting commonalities than differences. But failing to identify the controversial positions Barth bequeathed to subsequent generations of theologians gives the book an undue tilt toward the panegyric. In short, this is an excellent introduction to the appreciable Barth, but you will need to look elsewhere to find the depreciable one.

Finally, some brief comments ought to be made about Ron Hill's capable illustrations that occur every few pages. The *Armchair Theologians* series has used Hill's work for all of its volumes, and the cartoon content is technically proficient and communicative, standing halfway between a Sunday comic strip and a political cartoon. In its favor, it does create a sort of ironic dialectical mixture of subtly and crassness that may have given Barth a chuckle (for example, the inconspicuous presence of the Isenheim altarpiece in the cover art in contrast with the illustration featuring Barth driving a bulldozer labeled "Theological Reform, Inc." on page 76). But in a more serious vein, I wonder if some of the more irreverent moments ultimately hinder the stated goal of the book. Given the concerns Barth himself had about idolatry and theological precision, is it really fair to his program to feature repeated caricatures of God the Father as a jolly senior citizen or a smiling Jesus impaled on the cross saying, "Don't I seem dependable?" This is not a critique of the book per se (or even the cartoons—which are very amusing), only a question about whether the medium so employed does justice or violence to the person we are attempting to take seriously.

But these concerns are slight in light of the greater value of the book and could be raised in theory about any attempt to transpose a theological symphony into a single melody line, as must often be done to help the novice enter an otherwise overwhelming experience. There are hard questions at stake here, questions that juxtapose education of the laity, historical research methodology, and "high-end" theological reflection. I do not pretend to have the answer on how all of these can be merged into a single composition. It takes courage and wisdom to write of such matters for the "average Christian;" the risks of misunderstanding are high and the ultimate benefits hard to measure. But the task is vital. Barth knew well enough that theologians do not exist for their own incestuous dialogue but to serve the church and to be vehicles by which God's people might hear anew the Word. Franke, Hill, and the *Armchair Theologians* series clearly recognize this truth and seek to embody it in this latest installment in the series. So to that end I applaud them for their ongoing efforts to navigate this "impossible possibility."

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What Would Jesus Deconstruct? The Good News of Postmodernism for the Church. By John D. Caputo. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, 160 pp., \$19.99 paper.

In the latest volume in Baker Academic's series *The Church and Postmodern Culture*, John Caputo proclaims the "good news of postmodernism for the church," according to which deconstruction is best understood as "the hermeneutics of the kingdom of God" (pp. 26, 58, 84, 113). The early chapters of this book display Caputo's expertise as one of America's foremost expositors of the ethico-religious dimensions of Derrida's challenging work, providing a clear, accessible, and even playful explanation of the religious shape of deconstruction. Caputo presents his case by means of an intertextual reading of Derrida's work through Charles Sheldon's 1896 classic, *In His Steps*, the original source of the WWJD? question. From this unique combination, Caputo develops advice for how the church can benefit from deconstruction as it owns the fact that it is a provisional entity that looks toward the future coming of the kingdom of God.

For Caputo, deconstruction is not a determinate position or manifesto; there is no deconstructionism. Rather, deconstruction is a way of inhabiting an institution (like the church) that is driven by a passion for the truth about whatever is repressed, omitted,

or marginalized within that institution. Deconstruction is a process of letting that truth happen, letting the kingdom come, by opening up any rigid structures within the institution which prevent the fullness of truth from emerging. As Caputo sees it, if the church allows deconstruction to happen in its midst, it will increasingly be open to the faith, hope, love, forgiveness, and hospitality of the kingdom. He develops this theme through the first four chapters of the book, positioning justice, the gift, the impossible, the messianic, and hospitality as key elements of deconstruction. The eponymous fifth chapter is given to an application of deconstruction to the contemporary church's struggles with consumerism, war, feminism, homosexuality, and abortion. The book concludes with descriptions of two different churches that Caputo believes embody, in their unique ways, the deconstructive shape of the kingdom of God.

Readers who have only seen deconstruction treated as a theory of language may be led to wonder if the deconstruction treated in this book is indeed the same matter about which they have heard elsewhere, as that view is not much in evidence in this volume. Such readers will find footnote 10 in chapter 3 helpful in orienting them to the context of the terminology used by Caputo, but coverage of the full range of the Derridean corpus cannot be found here. Readers interested in that kind of overview should supplement Caputo's book with James K. A. Smith's *Live Theory* volume on Derrida. But even without the full picture, Caputo's exposition of the ethics of deconstruction could go a long way toward correcting some of the misunderstandings of deconstruction that can be found nearly everywhere today.

Unfortunately, though, as Caputo applies deconstruction to the real-world issues facing the church today, it becomes evident that his particular version of the postmodern gospel is not entirely good news for the evangelical church. The problem here is not the postmodern bogeyman, as some may fear. Rather, the problem is that Caputo himself is perhaps not postmodern enough; he is haunted by the Enlightenment attitude toward religion, and is thus not the best voice to herald the advent of postmodernism to evangelical readers. Understand, I appreciate Caputo's work and have learned a great deal from him, but this book, for all its promise, ends up being a mismatch of author and audience, creating problems that make it difficult for the "good news" of deconstruction to be heard.

To support this allegation, I will focus on what I take to be the most significant point at which Caputo and his evangelical readers are on divergent paths, namely, the status of Scripture. Whereas evangelical identity is shaped by a high view of the authority of Scripture, Caputo views the Bible as an "archive of Jesus" (pp. 33–34), a preserver of the *memory* of Jesus, from which the church draws to "repeat with a difference" the 'theo-poetics' of the kingdom of God (pp. 55f). There is a lot packed into this brief description, but the religion Caputo unpacks from it is not so much Christianity as it is deconstruction itself, as a prayer for the impossible, undeconstructible *event* of justice, or love, or the gift (it goes by many names). In saying this, I am not at all questioning the depth or honesty of Caputo's commitment to Christ; that is never at issue in this book. Rather, I am suggesting that his recommendation of Christian faith in this book would appear to be itself a function of his commitment to deconstruction, not the other way around. I actually do not think Caputo would disagree with me here, as his own statements about deconstruction, religion, and the Bible suggest, both in this text and elsewhere.

For Caputo, deconstruction "hits the ground" in the church "under the name of God—it being understood that this affirmation can be made under many names, with or without God" (p. 124; cf. pp. 68, 118). This fact, he says, "complicates the distinction between theism and atheism" (p. 58). The Caputo we encounter in this text is a follower of Derrida's "messianic without any concrete messianism" who only endorses the Christian faith to the degree that it lives up (or shows potential to live up) to the call of

undeconstructible love. Indeed, Caputo says, “[w]here love is implemented, there is the church” (p. 124).

This is, in many ways, a prototypical Enlightenment approach, as can be seen if we compare Caputo’s deconstructed church to the enlightened church envisioned by Immanuel Kant. For Kant, the true church is one that is willing to discard the historical particularities of its contingent faith, its authoritative text, and its ecclesiastical structure if these are found to hinder it from more purely approximating the true universal religion. Of course, Kant’s true universal religion is one of rationally defined morality, of which Caputo is no fan, but on closer analysis, Caputo’s approach is not so different from Kant’s. Obviously Caputo and Kant are very different thinkers, and I do not want to gloss over their differences. Kant wishes to articulate rationally the exact nature of the universal religion, whereas Caputo will staunchly resist all efforts to articulate the identity of the eschatological event that calls the church beyond itself; for Caputo, Kant’s naming of the end toward which we should move places limits on the openness, and thus the vigor, of faith. By contrast, Caputo thinks that deconstruction is called by unnameable love toward a radical openness to the unknown, unexpected visitation of the uninvited other. But despite these differences (and others), the spirit of Kant moves in Caputo’s assessment of Christianity. Like Kant, he treats the elements of Christian faith as contingent components to be accepted or discarded as they are measured against a call from beyond them.

So it is that Caputo, in the spirit of Kant, stands in judgment over passages of Scripture that he finds incompatible with his “weak universal” of undeconstructible love. Paul’s discussion of women in 1 Corinthians 11, Caputo asserts, has nothing to do with the kingdom of God (p. 106). Likewise, regarding homosexuality, Caputo argues that “the Greeks were right and the dominant tradition among Jews and Christians is wrong, just as the Scriptures are wrong to underwrite slavery and the oppression of women” (p. 109). He even hints that belief in Christ’s resurrection is not an essential component of Christian identity, and may in fact be deleterious to it (pp. 132–133). Sadly, his arguments are not based on the kind of close textual reading required either by deconstruction or faithful biblical hermeneutics, but are instead presented as defeaters of a series of straw man biblical “literalists.”

Caputo’s attitude toward the Bible is summed up neatly in his approving quote of Schüssler Fiorenza, who urges that no text “that perpetuates violence against women, children or slaves should be accorded the status of divine revelation if we do not want to turn the God of the Bible into a God of violence” (p. 111). Such a quote could have just as easily come from Kant who, in *Religion Within the Bounds of Reason Alone*, raised the question “as to whether morality should be expounded according to the Bible or whether the Bible should not rather be expounded according to morality.” Opting for the latter, Kant argues that Abraham should have rejected the supposed “voice of God” telling him to sacrifice his son. Because Abraham should have known rationally that killing innocents is universally wrong, he should not have heeded the voice of Yahweh, and should have chosen instead to follow the dictates of the moral law in faithfulness to the one true universal religion. While Caputo criticizes Kant’s stance on this issue, rightly observing that following Kant’s advice would place Abraham *above* the call of God (i.e., judging God’s call by means of his own autonomous faculties; p. 49), Caputo does not seem to realize that his handling of Scripture is a version of the same attitude. Specifically, his own understanding of justice and love govern his approach to the Bible.

But what is the source of Caputo’s understanding of justice and love? Kierkegaard maintained that we cannot hope to understand Abraham’s actions at Moriah apart from the call of God on his life; there simply are no standards external to that call by which we can make sense of his choices. This, then, raises the question of the source of the call on the church. For Caputo, that which calls us is nameless and unknown (pp. 49–50),

whereas for evangelicals, the One who calls us is Christ, through his Word. Caputo handles the undeconstructible call of “the kingdom” (one of the many names for the nameless event that calls us) as though it is discernible apart from the Word by which the kingdom is announced, and it is his sense of the call of the kingdom that moves him to ignore those texts in Scripture that seem to call him elsewhere. I would contend, however, that in doing so, Caputo has reduced the difficult alterity of divine self-revelation to human sameness. A more consistently deconstructive stance (and a more difficult one) is one that remains open to the otherness of God’s self-revelation, even when that revelation leads us to “places we do not want to go (*especially* to places we do not want to go)” (p. 54).

To wrestle carefully with the text of Scripture, to submit oneself to God’s authority through it, to be unwilling to jettison any part of it that does not seem to “fit”—this is to be deconstructively open to God’s otherness. If we take seriously the entirety of Scripture, holding to the Reformers’ sense of *sola scriptura*, we put ourselves and our churches in position to be deconstructed by God himself, through his Word and Spirit, according to the call of *his* justice, *his* righteousness, *his* shalom. *Pace* Caputo, this is the best context for deconstruction. I realize that Caputo would dismiss such faith as impure compared to the contentless expectation of the pure messianic hope he champions, but I would submit that there is more than enough *différance* between the kingdom of God and human ecclesiastical constructs. Thus, even as we look specifically to Scripture to form our expectations with regard to the kingdom, we must still be unreservedly open to the uninvited surprise of God opening up our constructs to be shaped in ways we never expected. It is here, in robust eschatological Christian community, that we find the true *event*, the true *gift*, the true *call* under which Christians are to live. Sadly, Caputo’s deconstructive *pharmakon* for the evangelical church goes down as more poison than cure, but in doing so, his book serves as a helpful reminder that if we allow God’s Word to deconstruct us, dividing joint from marrow, and if we purposefully act as agents of divine deconstruction in one another’s lives within the church, we should be led to a hospitality and love more life-giving than the “religion without religion” offered by Caputo and Derrida.

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A Community Called Atonement. By Scot McKnight. Nashville: Abingdon, 2007, xiv + 177 pp., \$17.00 paper.

Among our most helpful thinkers in current New Testament studies are those who have conscientiously bridged their NT expertise with other disciplines—scholars such as Richard Bauckham (with historiography), D. A. Carson (with cultural studies), and Anthony Thiselton (with hermeneutics). To this mix can be added Scot McKnight, bridging the gap between NT scholarship and the increasingly influential emergent church (EC). Already known to those familiar with the EC through his thickly-trafficked blog (www.jesuscreed.org), McKnight has provided what may be the most significant biblical and theological rationale to date for some of the distinct emphases of the EC, such as kingdom, community, and praxis. *A Community Called Atonement* is part of a new series entitled Living Theology, edited by Tony Jones, national coordinator for Emergent (www.emergentvillage.com).

An introductory chapter asserts that (1) atonement is not making the difference in the lives of Christians it ought to, and (2) the reason for this lack of atonement-fueled

transformation is the failure to incorporate all the metaphors for atonement into a coherent whole. The four parts that make up the rest of the book attempt just such a holistic enterprise.

Part One lays the foundation for the book, beginning (ch. 2) with a discussion of Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God, which McKnight defines as "the society in which the will of God is established to transform all of life" (p. 9). This kingdom theme is the first of seven starting points for McKnight's project. Importantly, he skims through Luke-Acts to explicate what he calls "the Lukan thread," arguing that atonement is "the restoration of humans—in all directions—so that they form a society (*the ecclesia*, the church) wherein God's will is lived out and given freedom to transform all of life. Any theory of atonement that is not an *ecclesial theory of the atonement* is inadequate" (p. 9, emphasis original). The next two chapters add six more starting points to the theme of kingdom. Chapter three addresses the perichoretic union of God in the Trinity, highlighting the *relationality* of this union into which believers are drawn. Moreover, it introduces the book's pervasive metaphor for sinners, that of "cracked Eikons," a critical point of which is that as Eikons (images) of God, humans are co-missional beings with God. Furthermore, this chapter describes sin as "hyperrelational" because it disrupts not only humanity's relationship to God but also to oneself, others, and the world. Chapter four discusses the final three foundation stones: eternity, described in strictly corporate terms; community, delineated in the three societies of Israel, kingdom, and church; and human performance or praxis as integrally connected to God's role in atonement.

Having laid a seven-layer foundation, McKnight moves on in Part Two to discuss atonement itself. Chapter five explores the role of metaphor in exegeting atonement, arguing for a more rhetorically sensitive approach to the function of metaphors on the way to making the larger point that one metaphor must not trump all others. Penal substitution provides an example of this danger. In chapter six McKnight issues a call for humility, recognizing not only that all of us are culturally located but also that the "mind-numbing complexity of sin" makes atonement difficult to grasp (p. 48). Chapter seven relies on Paul and Luther to affirm that "[t]he cross is the center of the atonement" (p. 51). Chapter eight then illumines the atoning function of the incarnation through a discussion of various biblical texts, making connections between the incarnation and atonement by brief looks at the themes of Jesus as the perfect Eikon, Jesus as the second Adam, and union with Christ. Chapter nine returns to the cross and draws on Mark and Paul in suggesting that the cross "is the work of God to restore cracked Eikons to union with God and communion with others for a missional life focused on others and the world" (p. 61). It is in this chapter that McKnight comments on the appropriateness of speaking of divine wrath. Chapter ten closes out Part Two by addressing Easter and Pentecost and concluding that the resurrection is no less crucial to atonement than the crucifixion.

At this point McKnight turns to consider the way in which the New Testament images for atonement are fundamentally *stories*; therefore, the stories of Jesus, Paul, and two early theologians form Part Three. Chapter eleven explores Jesus' own understanding of his death, arguing that he conceived it as a second Passover and a second Exodus. In an interesting twist it is queried why Jesus did not choose Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, if he saw his own death as one primarily of atonement. McKnight proposes that Passover was a more appropriate way for Jesus to portray his death as "an act of liberation from Rome and Israel's unjust leaders," though it is unclear precisely how this fits with a statement a few lines later that Jesus' death liberates "his people from their sins" (p. 86). Chapter twelve dives headfirst into swirling debates regarding justification, drawing on N. T. Wright and pushing for an accounting of justification that transcends both individual and forensic categories. Athanasius and

Irenaeus are then summoned (ch. 13) as witnesses to McKnight's proposal of the most full-orbed understanding of the atonement—that of recapitulation. In chapter fourteen we arrive at McKnight's specific attempt to capture all the relevant metaphors of the atonement in one phrase: "identification for incorporation" (p. 107). That is, *Jesus identifies* with humans by becoming one of them, and he *incorporates* humans into his own victory over death and the devil. The author then runs through the various atonement metaphors—recapitulation, *Christus Victor*, satisfaction, representation, and penal substitution—and suggests that each of these fits comfortably under the larger umbrella "identification for incorporation."

Part Four concludes the book by proposing various avenues in which this understanding of atonement gets lived out. Chapter fifteen explains that believers embody and extend God's atoning work by engaging in missional love that seeks the holistic welfare of the social context in which they live. The focus of chapter sixteen is justice, specifically systemic justice that is restorative and relational "in the here and now" (p. 132) rather than merely divine reprisal. Chapter seventeen fleshes out what it means to be missional. Drawing on Brian McLaren, McKnight explains that just as God's mission is to seek out and restore the whole person, so this mission forms the Christian's sacred summons. In a helpfully articulated distinction, McKnight urges Christians to be missional (going into the world) rather than "attractional" (waiting for the world to come to them). Chapter eighteen addresses the role of Scripture in atonement, provocatively declaring that "some Christians . . . ascribe too much to the Bible" when they should be starting with and centering on the Trinity (p. 143). Scripture itself, moreover, is missional, "designed by God to work its story into persons of God so that they may become doers of the good" (p. 147). Finally, chapter nineteen explores the atoning significance of prayer and the sacraments.

Perhaps a few lines from the middle of the book contain its best self-described summary: "This book is dedicated to deconstructing one-sided theories of the atonement. It is also dedicated to demonstrating that the cross is inseparable from the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus, Pentecost, and the ecclesial focus of the work of God. And this book is dedicated to deconstructing simplistic, individualistic theories of the atonement" (p. 61).

A Community Called Atonement possesses several notable strengths, regarding both style and content. Stylistically, McKnight has written a clear and accessible book that refuses to make thoughtful reflection and a fast-moving pace mutually exclusive. The book's brevity and clarity will encourage college students to work through it, while its fresh yet theologically responsible recasting of core doctrinal categories will appeal equally to senior scholars. Second—and this can hardly be overemphasized—McKnight has worked constructively rather than in theological attack mode. He has written in love. Both advocates of and objectors to the EC can learn from this example. Indeed, the importance of this point outweighs even issues of content, whether of strengths or weaknesses.

Moving to analysis of content, a third strength is the book's inclusive integration of multiple perspectives on the atonement. Too often advocates of a particular view of the atonement neglect the full-orbed balance that McKnight seeks to cultivate. Fourth, the book's challenge for the church to actively seek out unbelievers rather than passively (and naively) hope that unbelievers will seek out the church remains a timely challenge to evangelicals. Moreover, McKnight's focus on the church joining God in his quest to seek out broken-yet-divinely-imaged people, helping restore them in multiple anthropological dimensions, continues to be an urgent reminder of what is an undeniably central biblical imperative. Christian witness must not be limited to the dichotomous care for the "soul" while neglecting physical and material needs. Fifth, the book's consistent emphasis on union with Christ as a soteriologically comprehensive category is

a vital and urgently needed focus in light of current NT discussions (not least those regarding justification). Sixth, McKnight's emphasis on the corporate nature of the church and the way God seeks to create a worshipping *community* through atonement is thoroughly appropriate in the pervasively individualized culture in which Westerners live and to which so many writers are currently pointing.

Weaknesses, however, should also be noted. Indeed, some of this book's strengths *are* its weaknesses. We have just noted, for example, that McKnight extols the corporate nature of atonement. This is at the heart of the book and is the point of its title. Yet at times he appears to fall into the common trap of failing to appreciate the complementary truth that the transformation of individuals, while neither possible nor consummated apart from ecclesial integration, is foundational to the transformation of the community. The constant assertions that "the atonement cannot be restricted to saving individuals" and that "atonement is designed to create . . . community" (p. 75) make an important point, yet may paint a portrait as one-sided as the one being replaced. If some have neglected the corporate aspects of atonement, others in responding have neglected the individual. Is it biblically accurate, for instance, to depict eternity as "so corporate that *individuals simply are unrecognized*" (p. 26, emphasis original)?

Second, McKnight clouds the lines between atonement proper and its effects, making theologically conscientious reading produce, if not outright objection, at least head-scratching puzzlement. To be sure, one must not allow *distinction* between atonement and its results to become *separation* between the act and its consequences—a real danger indeed. Yet McKnight goes too far the other way when he says, for example, "atonement is not just something done to us and for us, *it is something we participate in—in this world, in the here and now*. It is not just something done, but something that is being done and something we do as we join God in the *missio Dei*" (pp. 30–31, emphasis original). He elsewhere adds that reading Scripture (p. 148), partaking of the Lord's Supper (p. 154), and prayer (p. 154) are all atoning. The desire to motivate Christians to live out the atonement they have professedly experienced is appropriate, yet such statements come perilously close to suggesting that Christians do what must only be attributed to the Triune God. McKnight seems to widen the semantic content of atonement to such an extent that one is not sure what it means beyond a generic sense of "edification" or "blessing." At numerous points I wondered why the book is labeled *A Community Called Atonement* and not, say, *A Community Called Blessing*. The latter would more palatably capture both what Christians experience with respect to God as well as what they then extend to others. McKnight's explication of the "Lukan thread" compounds one's puzzlement as he skips over the very passages that are arguably most germane to a discussion of atonement—namely, passion week in Luke and pivotal sermon highlights in Acts (2:38; 5:31; 10:43; 13:38).

Third, McKnight's pervasive image of the golfer and his various clubs in depicting the different metaphors for the atonement is both effective and misleading. While it makes his point that multiple perspectives on the atonement must be recognized (one club must not be utilized to the exclusion of others), it prevents the nuance needed in grasping the biblical message concerning atonement. For what if a single club (penal substitution? sacrifice?) is not merely one club among equals? Is it possible, for example, to be reconciled to one another or to be freed from the cosmic forces of the world without a prior, more fundamental reconciliation in which sin is decisively dealt with? Yet the argument made is that Christians simply need to give all aspects of atonement an equal place at the table. Readers will appreciate the impulse to expose the theological tunnel vision that views atonement as only concerning the individual and God; yet might not one element nonetheless remain the *fundamental* one, rather than one "golf club" among many? Perhaps, then, we need a more nuanced analogy. Maybe medicine would do: what if an individual suffering from a host of various maladies, daily ingesting corre-

sponding meds, is required at the start of each day to take a pill that activates all the others? Alternatively, could the various theories of the atonement be likened to doors lining a hallway, with one main door leading into the hallway itself and thus a prerequisite to accessing the other doors? Either of these images would indicate *both* that we must not restrict ourselves to a single metaphor—the other pills must be taken, the other doors must be opened—and that one metaphor—the activation pill, the main door—is foundational to the others.

Despite these reservations, *A Community Called Atonement* is an accessible and stimulating study worthy of reflection. Tony Jones writes that the volumes in this series will “raise as many questions as they answer” (p. ix); this inaugural installation lives up to his prediction. Whether this is goal-worthy—which appears to be Jones’s assumption (after all, the series will “promote a way of doing theology—one that is conversational, collegial, and winsome”)—is less certain. The best trait of the EC is its insistence on proactively living out Jesus’ kingdom vision of caring for the world in ways both immaterial and material, and the main weakness of the EC is unnecessarily clouding doctrinal categories on its way to commending such a way of life. This book exhibits both traits. Having registered a few concerns, however, it is my sincere hope that the daily life outlined by McKnight—marked not only by reconciliation with God but also practical love for and service toward fellow Eikons—becomes increasingly embodied in my own life and in that of the twenty-first century church.

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