

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The ESV Study Bible*. Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008, 2,752 pp., \$49.95.

The first printing of the *ESV Study Bible* (henceforth *ESVSB*) sold out before the 100,000 volumes arrived from the printer. Six months after being released in mid-October 2008, Crossway had printed 300,000 copies. An impressive list of evangelical pastors and teachers enthusiastically endorse the *ESVSB*, but the main reason it is so popular is its outstanding quality. Here are some of its key features:

1. Ninety-five evangelical Christian scholars contributed to the *ESVSB*, including Wayne Grudem (general editor), J. I. Packer (theological editor), C. John Collins (OT editor), Thomas R. Schreiner (NT editor), Darrell L. Bock, Mark Dever, Simon J. Gathercole, Grant R. Osborne, John Oswalt, John Piper, Daniel B. Wallace, Bruce A. Ware, Gordon J. Wenham, Peter J. Williams, Robert W. Yarbrough, and many more.

2. The 20,000 notes are clear, concise, and exegetically and theologically informed. They introduce each book of the Bible and then fill about one fourth of each page in the OT and one half in the NT.

3. Seventy articles scattered throughout the volume (including over 160 pages in the back) supply informed summaries of different sections of Scripture, OT and NT theology, systematic theology, Second Temple Judaism, ethics, hermeneutics, canon, textual issues, archaeology, original languages, historical theology (including world religions and cults), and salvation history. They could easily be published separately as a 700-page book.

4. Enhancing the learning process are over forty all-new engaging illustrations (e.g. the tabernacle, temple, and Jerusalem), 200 charts (e.g. genealogies in Genesis 5, the kings during the divided kingdom, Zechariah's visions, and NT timelines), and 200 full-color maps (e.g. possible exodus routes and the allotment of land during the conquest of Canaan).

5. Adjacent to the ESV text are 80,000 cross-references (identical to other editions of the ESV), and the concordance lists 3,178 words and 14,161 verses.

6. The printed text and format are clear and readable: the cross-references are in the gutter, the ESV text is in a single column printed according to genre (e.g. paragraphs for prose) in a 9-point Lexicon font, and the notes occur in two columns in a 7.25-point Frutiger font.

7. The paper quality and Smyth-sewn binding are superb for each available edition: hardcover, TruTone, bonded leather, genuine leather, and premium calfskin.

8. An online version, available free with any purchase of a print edition, has many additional features and resources, including audio narration of the whole Bible and the ability for the user to take notes. (For samples, videos, and more, see [www.esvstudybible.org](http://www.esvstudybible.org).)

The *ESVSB*'s doctrinal perspective "is that of classic evangelical orthodoxy, in the historic stream of the Reformation" (p. 10). It affirms the Bible's inerrancy and seeks "to represent fairly the various evangelical positions on disputed topics such as baptism, the Lord's Supper, spiritual gifts, the future of ethnic Israel, and questions concerning the millennium and other events connected with the time of Christ's return" (p. 11).

Some controversial passages evenhandedly present major views without clearly favoring one (e.g. Ezekiel 40–48; Dan 9:24–27; 1 Cor 11:24; 13:8; 2 Thess 2:5–7; 1 Tim 2:4; Heb 6:4–8; 1 Pet 3:19; the book of Revelation). Here is a sampling of how the *ESVSB* handles some controversial issues (including when it does favor a particular view):

- Genesis 1–2 neither requires nor precludes an ordinary-day interpretation.
- Gen 6:17 is possibly a local flood.
- Both the early and late dates for the exodus are viable options.
- Pharaoh is responsible for his hardened heart, but the Lord’s sovereign hand ultimately governs the hardening (Exod 4:21; etc.).
- Both the single and double fulfillment views of Isa 7:14 are viable options.
- In Jer 31:35–37, “the new covenant” will never cease (the *ESV* translation says “the offspring of Israel” will never cease), and God will never “cast off the Israel of this new covenant” (the *ESV* translation says that God will never “cast off all the offspring of Israel”).
- Peter is “the rock” in Matt 16:18.
- In Matthew 24–25, Jesus “apparently intertwines prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and his second coming.”
- John 6:40 “implies that no true believer will ever lose his or her salvation.”
- The miracle of tongues fulfills Joel 2:28–32, “though not all of it was yet fulfilled” (Acts 2:14–21).
- “In the early church, baptism was probably by immersion, at least as a general rule, though Christians dispute whether such a practice must always be followed literally today” (Rom 6:4).
- Salvation “is not ultimately based on human free will or effort but depends entirely on God’s merciful will” (Rom 9:16).
- Rom 11:26 refers to “the salvation of the end-time generation of the Jewish people in the future.”
- Paul teaches that men and women are equal in dignity and essence but distinct in their roles (e.g. 1 Cor 11:7–9, 14; 14:34–35; Gal 3:28; Eph 5:22–33; 1 Tim 2:12–13).
- NT prophecy “can have mistakes and must be tested or evaluated” (1 Cor 12:10).
- “The Israel of God” (Gal 6:16) refers to “the *believing* children of Abraham (3:7, 29) who belong to ‘Jerusalem above’ (4:26–27).”
- Regeneration logically precedes faith (Eph 2:5; 1 John 5:1).
- “The best explanation” for the Colossian heresy “is that it comes from the context of the local Jewish and pagan folk belief.”
- The verb “to meet” in 1 Thess 4:17 “may indicate that the subsequent movement of the saints after meeting Christ ‘in the air’ conforms to Christ’s direction, thus in a downward motion toward the earth.” This suggests a post-tribulational view, but the notes do not explain the major rapture views (though the introduction to Revelation does).
- Good works are the necessary result of justification (Jas 2:14–26).
- “Jesus’ sacrifice is offered and made available to everyone in ‘the whole world,’ not just to John and his current readers” (1 John 2:2).
- Genuine Christians “have been so transformed that they cannot live in a pattern of continual sin—though this does not mean that Christians are ever completely free from sin in this life” (1 John 3:9–10).

A note of warning is in order: there is no substitute for the primary text. As with any study Bible, people may make at least two serious errors with the *ESVSB*: (1) they

may use the notes as a crutch or shortcut instead of wrestling with the text itself; and (2) they may conflate the authority of the God-breathed text with the notes. The *ESVSB* explicitly warns readers of these perils (p. 9) and will serve the church to the glory of God when readers use the tool properly.

No other study Bible matches the *ESVSB* in quantity or quality. The 4.2-pound tome is “equivalent to a 20-volume Bible resource library” (p. 9), and it accomplishes its mission “to understand the Bible in a deeper way.” I have already recommended it several times to non-Christians who are exploring Christianity, and I joyfully gave seven *ESVSB*s to family members last Christmas. It is difficult to think of a better comprehensive tool that benefits non-Christians, young Christians, and mature Christians.

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*The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative.* By Christopher J. H. Wright. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006, 581 pp., \$38.00.

Christopher J. H. Wright, director of international ministries for the Langham Partnership International (John Stott Ministries) has set about to “develop an approach to biblical hermeneutics that sees the mission of God (and the participation in it of God’s people) as a framework within which we can read the whole Bible” (p. 17). He does so in four major steps: (1) The Bible and mission; (2) the God of mission; (3) the people of mission; and (4) the arena of mission.

“Mission” refers to “a long-term purpose or goal that is to be achieved through proximate objectives and planned actions” (p. 23). Whatever our mission is as the people of God, it “flows from and participates in the mission of God” (i.e. God’s long-term purpose as revealed in Scripture). “*Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation*” (italics original). Wright strikes a clear note of biblical authority in his definitions and initial orientation.

In Part I, “The Bible and Mission.” Wright defends the legitimacy of “mission” as a hermeneutical approach, arguing for its status as part of the Bible’s grand narrative: “Mission is what the Bible is all about; we could as meaningfully talk of the missional basis of the Bible as of the biblical basis of mission” (p. 29). We must read the Bible as much “missionally” as we do messianically (p. 30). Wright is not simply tracing mission as one of many themes in the Bible. He asserts that revelation itself is the consequence of God’s mission. Scripture itself is testimony of God’s purpose to make himself known. The foundation of the Bible is God’s mission. As a grand narrative, a missional reading of the whole Bible will keep us from selectively proof texting our own projection of what we want God’s mission to be, the tendency to “find what we brought with us—our own conception of mission, now comfortably festooned with biblical luggage tags” (p. 37). He goes on to say, “Rather than finding biblical legitimation for our activities, we should be submitting all our missionary strategy, plans and operations to biblical critique and evaluation.” The opening section concludes with Wright’s assertion that Christianity has anticipated experientially and is prepared to offer coherence within the seeming impasse between locality and universality presented by postmodern hermeneutics (p. 45).

Part II, “The God of Mission,” examines Israel’s monotheism within its historical context. God’s acts and his law bind Israel to God while distinguishing her from the

nations. Along the way, Wright engages debates pertaining to the nature of Israel's ethical monotheism. Yahweh did not simply claim to be Israel's God, but the God above all gods. His rule over history is not merely Israel's history, but that of the entire world. In Israel's exodus, exile, and return, God's reputation among the nations was a chief theme because it was God's intention that his name be universally known (p. 88). The revelation of God's name is ultimately achieved in Jesus (chapter 4).

Part III, "The People of Mission," traces how the people of God are enfolded into God's mission. Mission does not begin with Pentecost and the church. Rather, it begins with the Abrahamic covenant in which God promised not only to bless Abraham but the nations through him: "Arguably God's covenant with Abraham is the single most important biblical tradition within a biblical theology of mission and a missional hermeneutic of the Bible" (p. 189). Moreover, "the story of Abraham looks both backward to the great narrative of creation and forward to the even greater narrative of redemption" (p. 219).

Israel's election, therefore, must be seen in continuity with this story. Israel was redeemed not simply for her own sake, but for the sake of the world, "that [God's] name might be proclaimed in all the earth" (Exod 9:16). As national in character as the Mosaic covenant might seem, Israel's status as a kingdom of priests was ultimately for her priestly mediation of God's blessing to the nations (Exod 19:5-6). The monarchy of Israel as well must be seen in light of God's mission. In it God's universal kingship is anticipated, not simply his reign over Israel, and is ultimately realized in Jesus (p. 233). Israel's king would rule over the nations and build a house for the Lord for all nations (Isa 56:6-8).

Rather than pit Abraham against Moses, Wright demonstrates that the law was in keeping with God's missional purpose begun with Abraham. Abraham's faithfulness to God's commands would effect the blessing of the nations that God had resolved to pour out through Abraham (Gen 18:18-19). Obedience was profoundly important under Abraham. Conversely, God would become renowned because of the laws he gave Israel (Deut 4:6-7). The Mosaic covenant was not to focus on Israel's national identity to the exclusion of the nations. Chapter 11, "The Life of God's Missional People," develops the premise that "there is no biblical mission without biblical ethics" (p. 190). Israel's disobedience needed remedying not only for its own sake, but for the sake of God's mission (p. 241). The church similarly has a missional responsibility to reflect the reign of God in its corporate life (pp. 387ff.; cf. 1 Pet 2:9).

As with his previous treatments of OT law, Wright develops the economic and social implications of life under the covenant. This leads logically into what may be the most timely portion of the book—the relationship between evangelism and social action in carrying out God's mission. He urges the reader to see that what Christ did on the cross "goes far beyond (though of course it includes) the matter of personal guilt and individual forgiveness" (p. 314). He argues for a cross-centered holistic view of mission because the cross had cosmic implications.

Must evangelism always have priority? Wright notes in practice how often "the language of priority and primacy quickly tends to imply singularity and exclusion" (p. 317). Wright is determined to bring into view the broad scope of the gospel (and God) for those who are complacent to do evangelism only. Yet he is careful to distance himself from an approach that relegates evangelism to little or no importance for the sake of social action.

The final portion of the book, "The Arena of Mission," develops what earlier has been recognized as the creational scope of God's mission. Israel in the land typifies the future for humanity in the new creation. Through the expansion of his people, God will bring the whole earth under his reign. Wright's discussion of creation and our relationship to it resonates with increased environmental awareness among some evangelicals while giving caution about *de facto* deification of creation. The earth is God's,

and we are stewards of it. It yields abundance for us, but ultimately exists for the praise of its Creator and is to be treated accordingly by humankind.

Wright's book is highly commendable for its hermeneutical approach, its biblical theological development, its treatment of contemporary missiological issues, and its drumbeat to form our concept of mission from Scripture itself.

In distinction from Richard Baukham's briefer *Bible and Mission* (Baker, 2003), which offers guidance for negotiating God's mission in the post-9/11 world, Wright's *Mission of God* is a comprehensive exegetical work. Similar to Andreas J. Köstenberger's and Peter T. O'Brien's *Salvation to the Ends of the Earth* (InterVarsity, 2001) Wright primarily develops the OT roots of God's mission as it emerges in Christ, while the former spends the greater proportion on second temple Judaism and the NT development of God's mission. Readers familiar with G. K. Beale's *Temple and the Church's Mission* (InterVarsity, 2004) will find a complement in Wright. While Beale uses the garden/tabernacle/temple/church axis as a biblical-theological metanarrative, Wright devotes greater attention to other aspects of the law, the nations, and the subject of mission proper.

Wright could do more in connecting God's initial purpose in creation with what he does in redemption. While acknowledging there is a connection, the substantive development of his theme begins with Abraham. By contrast, Beale seizes upon the sanctuary aspects of Eden as foundational and traces the history of redemption primarily in terms of God's progressive establishment of an earthly dwelling with his people, ultimately in Jesus Christ and finally in the new heavens and earth. Beale's work has the pronounced eschatological contours of one who has been shaped by the eschatologically-conditioned biblical theology of Herman Ridderbos, Geerhardus Vos, and Meredith Kline (none of whom are referenced by Wright or included in his otherwise excellent bibliography). As a result, Wright's work does not enjoy the full support of the Pauline eschatology nor the broader eschatological notion that "the eschatological is an older strand in revelation than the soteric" (G. Vos, *Biblical Theology* [Eerdmans, 1948] 140). Including this would only strengthen Wright's approach.

On a related note, *The Mission of God* would benefit from greater ecclesiological development. While appropriately refusing to sever the church's mission from what God had begun in Abraham and advanced through Moses, Israel, and David, Wright does not give full expression to the church as a sign of the new creation, the presence of the new creation in the midst of the old, and the means of extending God's kingdom. Had he done so, it would have given added support to his articulation of the "centripetal" as well as the "centrifugal" aspect of God's mission (pp. 523ff.).

On a further related note, there would seem to be some benefit in correlating Wright's treatment of mission with the concept of kingdom. At a time when kingdom is growing in popularity and finds itself attached to virtually any endeavor associated with Christians, Wright's call back to a biblical foundation for mission could be echoed with benefit for calling us back to a biblical concept of the kingdom of God.

Finally, it seems judgment on the nations is de-emphasized for the sake of illuminating God's purposes for the nations. There is only one tangential reference to hell, and the discussion on judgment is limited to judgment upon the gods of the nations. Since there are contemporary developments alongside and from within evangelicalism that are beginning to question the classic doctrine of eternal conscious punishment, some affirming or clarifying word would seem prudent.

These suggestions in no way detract from the enormous value of Wright's work in going beyond trying to trace a thin thread of a missions mandate in the OT until its full flowering in the NT.

Some readers will find great benefit in reading the epilogue first, which provides an overview of what Wright is attempting. There is also, in addition to a brief table

of contents with page enumeration, a detailed outline immediately following. Though lacking page numbers, it is a helpful big picture of the book's argument for occasional reorientation for the reader.

Christopher Wright has truly laid a cornerstone in the edifice of mission, one on which a biblical theology of mission would be wise to build.

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*Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament: Introducing the Thought World of the Old Testament.* By John H. Walton. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006, 368 pp., \$24.99 paper.

In *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, John Walton has provided teachers and students alike an accessible handbook for the comparative study of the OT. The book is divided into five parts. Part 1, "Comparative Studies," consists of two chapters that introduce readers to the history and methods of comparative study and to the relationship between comparative study, scholarship, and theology. In chapter 1, Walton explains that comparative study "constitutes a branch of cultural studies in that it attempts to draw data from different segments of the broader culture (in time and/or space) into juxtaposition with one another in order to assess what might be learned from one to enhance the understanding of another" (p. 18). Bible students need comparative study because the literary genres, religious practices, and cultural dimensions of ancient Israelite theology are all rooted in ancient Near Eastern culture, and "without the guidance of background studies, we are bound to misinterpret the text at some points" (p. 25). Walton cautions against "parallelomania" and concludes the first chapter with some suggested principles for comparative study (pp. 26–27).

In chapter 2, Walton considers the role of comparative studies in both scholarly and confessional contexts and seeks to work out an "integrated role" for comparative study. Following the publication of Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859), much of biblical scholarship conformed to evolutionary theory. However, Walton contends, "These evolutionary theories had been birthed in an environment where theorizing led to models and hypotheses—but one in which those ideas could not be tested against empirical data" (p. 30). With the "discovery" of the ancient Near East, the decipherment of its languages, and the publication of many of its texts, "the spate of primary source material allowed for the reigning theories to be placed under the microscope" (p. 30). In these and other ways, comparative studies both challenged and enhanced biblical scholarship. Walton also discusses the reaction to comparative studies in confessional scholarship, which has not always been positive due to its implication "that the Old Testament is not unique" (p. 35). Walton concludes by envisioning an integrated role for comparative studies in which it assists in critical analysis, defense of the biblical text, and exegesis of the biblical text (pp. 38–40).

Part 2 consists of a single chapter in which Walton provides a summary of the literature of the ancient Near East. The chapter is divided up into genres (e.g. myths, literary texts and epics, ritual texts, and divination/incantation texts), and under each of those headings, examples of writings from that genre from various ancient Near Eastern cultures (e.g. Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Hittite/Hurrian, and Ugaritic) are summarized, ranging from the Eridu Genesis to Nineteenth Dynasty Egyptian love poetry. The selections are all annotated so readers can easily find copies of the texts under discussion.

In Parts 3, 4, and 5, Walton then draws on the aforementioned source material to explore comparatively understandings of religion (Part 3), the cosmos (Part 4), and people (Part 5). In these chapters, Walton explores each of these topics in relation to the “common cognitive environment” (pp. 21, 331) they shared in the ancient Near East. Interspersed throughout these chapters in shaded text boxes are “comparative explorations” that focus on specific points of contact between ancient Near Eastern concepts, their appearance in the Hebrew Bible, and similarities and differences in their conception in the two venues. Three excursuses are interspersed throughout the text as well, treating the topics of polytheistic iconism (pp. 114–18), ziggurats (pp. 119–23), and Deut 18:20–22 (pp. 270–74). As an example of how the chapters explore their subjects, in chapter 10, on historiography, Walton first seeks to understand the nature of historiography itself. He notes that “at some point, if a record of events is to be preserved, it must be incorporated into a written form,” and that “such an undertaking requires the compiler to work under a set of guiding principles, conscious and subconscious” (pp. 217–18). This collection of principal values then characterizes one’s historiography. Walton briefly discusses the different genres of Mesopotamian historiography, including commemorative records, chronographic texts, narrative works, and historical epics and legends. Following the establishment of definitions and the exploration of genres, Walton spends the remainder of the chapter attempting to “understand the cognitive environment of the ancient world with regard to history and historiography” (p. 220). Walton then moves on to an exploration of the role of deity in historiography, the view of time and history in historiography, how historiography signifies, and what values motivated the historical enterprise. In the midst of this discussion, a shaded textbox contains a comparative exploration of Israelite historiography, and explores the ways in which Israelite historiography compares and contrasts with historiography in its ancient Near Eastern environment. The book concludes with an appendix that includes an annotated list of thirty of the most important gods and goddesses of the ancient Near East, followed by a bibliography, and indexes for Scripture, foreign words, modern authors, ancient literature, and subjects.

Part 1 of *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* serves as an excellent introduction to comparative studies. Part 2 is also a fine survey of ancient Near Eastern literature, but it could have benefited from having excerpts from each of the examples of literature listed. Since the summary of literature only includes a précis of each selection, readers will still need to have access either to original sources or to other works that include excerpts, such as B. T. Arnold and B. E. Beyer, *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (Baker, 2002) or V. H. Matthews and D. J. Benjamin, *Old Testament Parallels: Laws and Stories from the Ancient Near East* (2d ed.; Paulist, 1997).

Walton’s work is in some ways similar to Kenton L. Sparks’s *Ancient Texts for the Study of the Hebrew Bible: A Guide to the Background Literature* (Hendrickson, 2005), which is also intended to serve purposes of comparative study. Sparks’s book is essentially an introduction to a wide range of ancient literature through classification, description, and bibliography. Walton’s *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, however, not only seeks to introduce texts, but to use them interactively with the OT to show the uniqueness of the OT conceptual world. For these purposes, Walton’s book may be the best and most accessible handbook available, and it would certainly serve well as either a textbook or as supplementary reading for courses in OT or on ancient Israel.

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*Leviticus*. By Ephraim Radner. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008, 320 pages, \$29.99.

The bridging of Lessing's "ugly ditch" between history and faith has been the aim of several commentary series, among which is the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (BTCB). However, the BTCB is distinct among recent contributions by virtue of making systematic theology and its accompanying history of interpretation into a methodological center, in contrast to the pastoral and biblical-theological emphases of the NIV Application Commentary and the Two Horizons Commentary, respectively. The present BTCB volume on *Leviticus* by Ephraim Radner, professor of historical theology at Wycliffe College (University of Toronto), is thus more of a compendium of rabbinical, patristic, and medieval interpretations than a biblical commentary in the conventional sense.

Radner's invocation of the *analogia fidei*, centering on his claim that "the details of the text can and must be explicated by the acts of God in Christ" (p. 77), poses an intentional contrast to the historical and philological exegesis of Jacob Milgrom's three-volume tome in the Anchor Bible series. While Radner's work provides a variety of pastoral and theological insights that contemporize the book, his approach is significantly handicapped by its lack of attention to the biblical text itself. This problem is exacerbated by the unusual decision to omit any English rendering of *Leviticus* in the body of the commentary. Even if the prefacing remarks of R. R. Reno, the series editor, were correct that "the Bible is not semantically fixed" and that "textual ecumenism" should be practiced, it should be noted that the reader's need for an English text to follow the commentator's exposition represents a basic feature of a commentary's usability rather than an uncritical capitulation to "a modernist, literalist hermeneutic" (p. 13).

Radner's interpretive method seeks to overcome the modern Christian fixation on the "shellfish argument" (p. 18; cf. *Leviticus* 11) by using various aspects of pre-critical approaches to exegesis. Following the trajectory set by the book of *Hebrews*, Radner traces the use of figural language not only in the sacrificial sections of the book, but follows Origen's interpretation of the communal laws in that "the divine will behind the law of *Leviticus* finds its formal exposition within the body of the Son himself as it reorders the whole of creation" (p. 26). While elsewhere Radner expresses concern that Origen's spiritualizing hermeneutic "transforms the referents of *Leviticus* into free-floating signifiers" (p. 88), the same criticism can often be leveled at Radner's own views, as in his questionable interpretation of Nadab and Abihu's destruction by divine fire (*Lev* 10:1–3) as a figure of God's kenotic love rather than unyielding holiness (pp. 96–105).

Radner's commentary on two important passages in the Christian tradition, *Leviticus* 16 and 19, highlights further both the promise and peril of his work. For *Leviticus* 16, Radner again concurs with Origen that the book of *Hebrews* preserves the authoritative interpretation of the Day of Atonement ritual. As such, Origen asserts that "the two goats represent the two destinies that await those within the Christian body: those who are repentant . . . and those who cannot" (p. 164). More than the usual Christian emphasis on substitutionary atonement, however, Origen proves helpful for recovering the narrative dimension of the ritual as "a concrete reflection of a much larger history that embraces Jesus's passage through the world of time" (p. 162). Here it is striking that Origen and Radner have used the book of *Hebrews* to conclude this ritual is a microcosm of God's creation, thereby arriving via a different route at a view shared by historical-critical scholars. Though working without direct reference to the ancient Near Eastern data, Radner has given us a thoughtful exposition of the Day of Atonement ceremony in both its ritual and narrative dimensions.

However, a similarly felicitous convergence of canonical, theological, and historical concerns is missing from Radner's interpretation of Leviticus 19–20. Though Radner acknowledges the general consensus that the call to holiness in Leviticus 19 is the theological center of the book (p. 201), he redefines holiness in phenomenological rather than essential terms: "*It is because God is seen by mortal creatures that God is holy and hence known to be glorious*" (p. 207, emphasis original). While Radner is undoubtedly correct that "[t]he laws of holiness . . . are intimately bound to the nature of God's self-coming to his creatures in time" (p. 208), his overtly theological agenda lead him to overlook the broader biblical context of holiness. The Pentateuch's emphasis on God's self-revelation, especially in the nexus between theophany and holiness in Exodus (e.g. Exod 3:5; 19:6, 23; 20:8; cf. Deut 4:9–24), seems to suggest that divine holiness is primarily a matter of God's transcendent essence, though not without significant phenomenological implications (e.g. Israel's terror at Sinai). Radner's neglect of the canon as interpretive context is also evidenced in his passing over of Lev 19:18, the seminal passage that provides Jesus' statement of the second greatest commandment as "love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark 12:31).

In sum, Radner has presented a stimulating but flawed reading of Leviticus from a pre-critical perspective. Though this commentary is a creative attempt to recover this abstruse book for the Christian church, a better balance between history and faith has already been achieved by the Leviticus commentaries of evangelical OT scholars, most notably Gordon Wenham (NICOT, Eerdmans) and Allen Ross (*Holiness to the Lord*, Baker).

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*God's Twilight Zone: Wisdom in the Hebrew Bible.* By T. A. Perry. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008, xxi + 208 pp., \$19.95.

T. A. Perry has expertise in wisdom literature; among his publications is *Wisdom Literature and the Structure of Proverbs*. This new work of Perry's, *God's Twilight Zone*, attempts to detect the influence of wisdom in other parts of the OT, including Genesis, Exodus, Judges, 1 Samuel, and 1 Kings, along with studies of typical wisdom texts such as Proverbs and Qohelet. This sort of approach has been supported by scholars such as Moshe Weinfeld and Katherine Dell, yet has been severely criticized by James Crenshaw who nonetheless wrote a recommendation excerpted on the back cover of the monograph. At any rate, this work is wholeheartedly committed to reading wisdom from the entire OT. Its title, *God's Twilight Zone*, signifies what Perry regards nuances of wisdom: "At twilight things become blurred, open to multiple interpretations" (p. xi). In other words, proposes Perry, wisdom arose in the areas between the full revelation of YHWH and his absence, remaining susceptible to multiple interpretive possibilities and attentive to the "normal course of everyday life and its secular meanderings" (p. 175).

This study is composed of an introduction, three main parts, a conclusion, and a short excursus. Throughout the work, Perry's exegetical stance expounds interesting and creative interpretations, often deeply associated with the rabbinic traditions. The introduction provides Perry's methodological basis and chapter-by-chapter summaries. Part I, "Creating and Maintaining a Righteous World," investigates the stories of Noah, Tamar and Judah, Joseph, and Pharaoh. It is argued throughout the analyses of these stories that the contrast between *tsaddiq* (the righteous) and *rasha'* (the wicked) is markedly maintained. For instance, Tamar and Joseph were righteous and ably helped

Judah learn to become righteous as well, whereas Pharaoh remained wicked. Perry's analysis of Tamar's story is interesting, as it postulates that Judah's leadership was approved by his acknowledgment that Tamar was more righteous than he. Part II, "Interpreting in the Twilight Zone," seems to support best the main thesis of the work. It attempts to interpret the narrative of Samson's riddles, the proverb concerning the prophetic status of Saul, Solomon's judgment in the disputed baby story, and Psalm 1, paying particular attention to the ambivalence of these "twilight" texts. For example, in Perry's analysis of the disputed baby story in 1 Kings 3, the real wisdom is found in the woman who suggested giving the baby to another woman, rather than in Solomon. This interpretation goes well with Perry's view that at the heart of wisdom is the preservation and multiplication of life that has developed since YHWH's command in Gen 1:26–28.

Part III, entitled "The Rebirth of Vulnerability and Wonder," probes the famous funeral scene in Qoh 12:2–7 and the reflection on four things in Prov 30:18–20, attempting to explicate the theme of the vulnerability of human life and that of wonder, which Perry views as something between the natural and the miraculous. For Perry, both themes squarely depict the twilight zone of the human world. Finally, a conclusion and an additional excursus on righteousness ("The Ethics of the Fathers") finish the work.

This monograph features two distinctive points. First, Perry traces the nuances of wisdom from the beginning of Genesis throughout the OT, arguing that wisdom has existed since then and has gradually taken over the role of prophecy and YHWH's presence in the human world. He avers that the nature of wisdom can be defined by its ambivalence in meaning and application, which he postulates is undoubtedly present in all of the texts dealt with in this work. In this regard, Perry makes a contribution to the approach eager to find wisdom's place beyond the wisdom literature, though others may find themselves disagreeing with Perry's interpretations. Second, Perry's exegesis is creative and original, yet sometimes significantly departs from generally accepted interpretive options in scholarship. Many of his suggestions will most likely provoke further discussions or face opposition. Yet, it is also certain readers interested in learning new insights will enjoy and benefit from reading this work.

On the whole, Perry's work presents a mix of fresh ideas and in-depth knowledge of both the OT and the Jewish interpretive traditions. Therefore, it is welcome and warmly recommended for readers of wisdom literature.

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*Jonah*. By Phillip Cary. Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2008, 187 pp., \$29.99.

Those familiar with the Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible series (BTCB) will know Phillip Cary's *Jonah* is not like most other recent *Jonah* commentaries. This commentary, like the others in BTCB, reads the text theologically rather than focusing on the questions raised by historical criticism. Since Cary is not a biblical scholar and does not know Hebrew (he teaches philosophy at Eastern College), he based his Hebrew research on Strong's Concordance, and the commentary has little interaction with other sources. (The entire book has six footnotes.) While never citing any scholars specifically, Cary follows a post-exilic date for the writing of *Jonah* (pp. 32, 35–36, 140). Influences for the writing of the commentary include Karl Barth, Kendall Soulen, Robert Alter, and Meir Sternberg (p. 21).

The book begins with an introduction entitled “Christian Readers of a Jewish Book.” The author rejects a moralistic message of Jonah (Don’t be like that silly Jonah!); we need to be willing to identify with the “ridiculous prophet ourselves” (p. 18). The reason for this rejection of a moralistic message of Jonah is that it often results in anti-Semitism.

The heart of the book is a verse-by-verse rambling journey through the book of Jonah. Cary includes a variety of types of comments. The majority of the comments are literary or social observations. Jonah’s ability to pay a fare to leave Israel shows that he is upper class (p. 43). Jonah’s story about why he fled is a lie (p. 130). The gourd (Jonah 4:6) represents the line of David (pp. 143–44). The last phrase in the book (“abounding in livestock”) is meant to be a joke: “Well, everybody has to abound in *something*” (p. 161).

Other observations show verbal links between Jonah and other parts of the Bible. Based on the meaning of his name and the dove of Genesis 8, Jonah is a sign of peace (p. 30). Cary connects Jonah’s flight to Tarshish with the Tarsus of Paul; not only this, but Jonah passes through Joppa, a city associated with Peter (p. 41). The three-day walk of Nineveh (Jonah 3:3) reminds him of other threes in the Bible, such as three days in the fish, the three years of Samaria’s siege, and the three days of Jesus in the tomb (p. 107).

As expected, many of his observations are theological: Jonah is most Christlike when he sacrifices his life for the sailors (p. 66). Jonah is the propitiation for the sailors; the sailors are a picture of a Pilate with obedient motives (p. 69). The problem is not that God judges (cf. Nahum), but that we see ourselves as the afflicted and view God as our personal weapon against our own personal enemies rather than as the judge of the earth (p. 134).

The book concludes with an epilogue, which contains the heart of Cary’s theologizing: God has not rejected his people Israel, although this does not imply the Jews do not need to follow Jesus (p. 169). Jonah ends with an open question because it should challenge the reader: “It is as those who have already been rescued from the power of death that we face with Jonah the always open question, ‘Should I not pity . . . ?’” (p. 174).

One’s response to this book will largely depend on what one thinks of theological interpretation of Scripture (TIS). Those who heed the TIS’s call to read each text as part of the Bible, to make connections with other texts, and to follow pre-critical biblical exegesis will appreciate Cary’s work. Those who think TIS flattens the Bible, makes outlandish connections between texts, and reads theology into the text will dislike the book. For example, many Hebrew scholars will think that Cary over-reads some Hebrew words, such as when he spends a full paragraph describing the importance of God speaking and not simply doing based on the word “saying” in Jonah 1:1 (p. 34). But those who appreciate TIS will applaud this sort of reading as freeing us from the death grip of historical criticism.

Overall, while not living up to all the ideals of TIS (e.g. only a few references to figures from church history appear, and there is little global perspective), this book is a good place to begin for those wondering what TIS looks like in practice. And even for those who dislike TIS, the book is fun to read compared to the frequently dreary prose of most commentaries, as the following quotation illustrates: “This is clearly a diverse, multicultural crew, displaying a vibrant religious pluralism. Fat lot of good it does them” (p. 49).

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*Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament.* Edited by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007, xxviii + 1239 pp., \$54.95.

This much-anticipated work fills an important niche in the study of the Scriptures. Commentaries regularly observe *that* NT authors use the OT but seldom are able to reflect at length on *how* they do so. Monographs review specific aspects of the NT use of the OT but are for the most part rather narrowly focused. Articles and anthologies survey “the use of the OT in” Matthew, Paul, or Hebrews, but only in summary fashion. This distinctive volume provides extensive text-by-text commentary on OT citations, allusions, and references in the NT. It supplements commentaries on the various NT writings by providing greater detail on the NT use of the OT and furnishes the raw data for broader analyses of the way the various NT authors use the OT. There are dangers, of course, in commenting on texts that have been isolated from their contexts, but the authors are sensitive to these. At the same time, there is value in focusing carefully on this important aspect of the NT writings. This area has received increased attention in recent years, some of it fueled by a number of the contributors to this volume.

The editors, both eminent scholars, have assembled an impressive team of evangelical contributors with extensive background in the NT use of the OT and/or in the biblical books on which they have written here: Craig Blomberg (Matthew), Rikki Watts (Mark), David Pao and Eckhard Schnabel (Luke), Andreas Köstenberger (John), Howard Marshall (Acts), Mark Seifrid (Romans), Roy Ciampa and Brian Rosner (1 Corinthians), Peter Balla (2 Corinthians), Moisés Silva (Galatians and Philippians), Frank Thielman (Ephesians), Greg Beale (Colossians), Jeff Weima (1 and 2 Thessalonians), Phil Towner (Pastorals), George Guthrie (Hebrews), D. A. Carson (General Epistles), and Greg Beale and Sean McDonough (Revelation).

As the editors note in the introduction, there is an “astonishing variety of ways in which the various NT authors make reference to the OT” (p. xxvi). Commenting on them requires a degree of variety as well. Explicit citations and important allusions are typically analyzed under six subheadings identified by the editors in the introduction: the NT context, the OT context, the use of the OT source in early Judaism, textual issues, the way in which the NT text uses or appeals to OT source, and the theological use made of the OT source. These examinations are sometimes quite extensive, as in the case of ten pages devoted to 2 Cor 3:16, although two to four pages appears to be the norm. The editors permitted a couple of contributors to present their findings in a “more discursive fashion,” notably Mark Seifrid in Romans and Moisés Silva in Galatians. Seifrid’s Romans is a thoughtful 80-page survey of the entire book from the perspective of its dependence on and use of the OT.

The NT also uses the OT in other ways: references to people and events, the requirements of the law, theological principles, and expectations of things to come. These may be mentioned explicitly or evoked by more subtle allusions or analogies and are highlighted in varying degrees. There are just three lines on the “the trumpet as a sign of the day of the Lord” in 1 Cor 15:52 and six on “the Lord’s Messiah” in Luke 2:7. There is a half page each on the genealogy in Matthew 1, the golden calf (Acts 7:40), Melchizedek (Hebrews 7), and the reference to “the twelve tribes” in Jas 1:1. There are two pages on Jesus’ reinterpretation of the Passover meal at the last supper (Luke 22:17–20) and three pages each on John’s accounts of Jesus’ meeting with Nicodemus (John 3) and the woman of Samaria (John 4).

The treatments of some books focus primarily on the explicit citations (e.g. Mark), while others comment on other references and allusions (e.g. Luke, Hebrews), and still others provide a section-by-section commentary in light of the focus on the OT (e.g. John). Despite their lack of explicit citations, Colossians and Revelation receive ex-

tended treatment for their many OT allusions. Not surprisingly, the longest contributions are on the Gospels (100 or more pages each) and Acts, Romans, Hebrews, and Revelation (80–90 pages each).

The introductions to each book are generally brief (a couple of pages) but helpful. Several offer more substantial analysis. Andreas Köstenberger provides six pages of tables and analysis summarizing (among other things) John's use of introductory formulas, text form (MT or LXX), other works (NT and DSS) that cite the same texts, and a longer, tentative list of "verifiable OT allusions and verbal parallels." Greg Beale and Sean McDonough provide eight pages of substantive reflection on the OT influence on Revelation, the challenge of interpreting combined allusions, and whether we are to understand the OT in light of Revelation or vice versa. Students of Acts will find Howard Marshall's fifteen-page introduction alone worth the price of the book, with its substantial overview of issues involved in Luke's use of the OT, including sources (canon, testimonia), types of usage (e.g. quotations, allusions), functions (e.g. history, promise and fulfillment), Jewish exegesis and preaching, introductory formulas, narrative shaping, and intertextuality.

The bibliographies for each NT book offer valuable starting points for students and scholars. Several are quite substantial: nine pages (of rather small type) on Matthew, twelve each on Mark and Luke, and four or five on John, Acts, and Revelation.

The volume concludes with an exhaustive 77-page index of Scripture and other ancient writings that may be too much of a good thing. The sheer number of references will discourage any but the most hardy (or dissertation occupied) from examining all of the references to Isaiah 40 or 53 (300 each), Psalm 118 (200), or Genesis 3 or Psalm 78 (80 each). The references to other ancient writings, however, illustrate something of the scope of the work as a whole; these include the OT apocrypha, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Mishnah, the Babylonian Talmud, the Jerusalem Talmud, the targums, other rabbinic works, the OT pseudepigrapha, the Apostolic Fathers, the Nag Hammadi texts, the NT apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, and various Greek and Latin works (including Josephus, the early fathers, and secular sources).

Of course, "when words are many, sin is not absent" (Prov 10:19 NIV). Those who have studied some of these texts in detail will differ with the contributors at points. I will mention only two. In a detailed and helpful examination of Acts 15:15–18, Marshall regrettably appears to follow Richard Bauckham, who holds that the citation of Amos 9:11–12 is conflated with other OT texts and that promised restoration is of the eschatological temple rather than the Davidic kingdom; neither of these is likely and Marshall himself initially seems to accept a reference to the kingdom (pp. 590–91). In a thoughtful treatment of the armor of God (Eph 6:10–20), Thielman understands the battle to which the church is called as primarily defensive ("resist . . . the attacks of the devil") rather than as offensive and missional (as argued by, e.g., Markus Barth); as the messianic warrior of Isaiah 59 takes action to accomplish God's redemptive purposes, so the church is to wield the gospel (the word of God) and pray for the fearless proclamation of "the mystery" by its chief ambassador. Yet these are matters about which interpreters will continue to differ.

While this is a rigorously scholarly work, it does not demand too much from those pastors and students who are willing to take the time to mine its riches. Those lacking Greek and Hebrew (transliterated when they appear) will have little trouble following most entries. Textual issues are addressed when they arise but are dealt with quickly. The challenge comes from the compactness of the writing and the many references to biblical (and extrabiblical) texts. There is a great deal of information here, and those who profit most will be the ones who like the Bereans read with an open Bible (or two) and take the time to examine carefully the references themselves. Students and

scholars will find the commentary an invaluable basis for further study of the way(s) in which each NT author uses the OT and in which each OT text is used by various NT authors.

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*Ancient Jewish and Christian Perceptions of Crucifixion.* By David W. Chapman. WUNT 2/244. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, xiii + 321 pp., €59.00 paper.

Chapman's thesis concerns the impact of Jewish perceptions of crucifixion on Christian thought. His review of preceding literature demonstrates the importance of this study, since contemporary research related to crucifixion and Judaism focuses primarily on the Graeco-Roman world, thereby limiting scholarly understanding to the history and practice of crucifixion. His work examines "ancient Jewish views concerning the penalty of crucifixion through the period of the compilation of the Talmuds" (p. 2), drawing inductive conclusions from this material. Chapman's examination of crucifixion terminology in biblical and extra-biblical literature leads to the conclusion that there were both negative and positive attitudes toward crucifixion and the crucified. Through apocryphal, pseudopigraphic, and rabbinic literature, Chapman documents the frequency of crucifixion in the Roman world in which Jews lived, leading some to disdain it, others to see it as a just means of dealing with rebels and scoundrels, and still others to adopt this form of punishment themselves.

In chapter 1 Chapman notes that "suspension" terminology found in the Hebrew Bible usually referred to any form of bodily suspension and not specifically crucifixion, but he asserts that the terms for bodily suspension did not exclude crucifixion since it fit within this broader category (p. 32). Chapman's examination of crucifixion terminology in this chapter provides the fodder for his subsequent discussion of the current debate as to whether or not some Jews saw crucifixion as a viable means of execution (p. 33). He notes, however, that Jewish attitudes toward crucifixion were in flux during the Second Temple period (pp. 37–38).

Chapter 2 focuses on extra-biblical Jewish narratives throughout the Graeco-Roman world in the Hellenistic and Roman ages on the subject of death by suspension and crucifixion, looking at communal attitudes rather than historical reconstruction. In this chapter Chapman demonstrates that Jews throughout the known world during these time periods were well familiar with various means of bodily suspension used for public execution. After a brief discussion of the legitimacy of these forms of execution, he points out the Jewish and early Christian attitude toward those crucified. He notes Philo's presentation of crucified Alexandrian Jews as "innocent sufferers rather than as religious martyrs" (p. 94). This line of thinking seems to have developed early in the first century in the *Assumption of Moses*, which implies that crucifixion would be the means by which God's righteous remnant would be martyred. Rabbinic literature shows a diversity of perspectives, ranging from crucifixion as a horrible death of innocent sufferers to crucifixion as a just recompense for banditry or witchcraft (p. 95). Chapman also notes Josephus's emotionally objective comments regarding crucifixion. In summary, the author concludes that views of crucifixion varied, although crucifixion was almost universally considered to be a horrendous penalty, whether deserved (as with rebels and bandits) or undeserved (as with innocents and martyrs).

Chapter 3 looks specifically at biblical suspension texts and Jewish tradition related to suspensions. Chapman admits that crucifixion is not in view in the Hebrew Bible but

suggests that these texts may nonetheless have influenced or informed Jewish attitudes toward crucifixion (p. 97). He also suggests that when some OT authors spoke of bodily suspension, they may be referring to forms similar to those paralleling Assyrian reliefs that depict persons impaled on stakes (p. 97). With each of the biblical texts Chapman examines, he includes a discussion of interpretations of these texts from various ancient Jewish writers. His purpose in this is to point out that interpreters looked at suspension in a way consistent with their personal experience in the matter. He asserts that before David's rule Jewish society knew of *post mortem* bodily suspension and may even have adopted the practice themselves (p. 174). He notes that, although biblical texts referring to bodily suspension did not intend crucifixion, these texts were "actualized" by later readers who associated these penalties with suspension methods commonly practiced in their own era (p. 175). By the Hellenistic and Roman periods this would involve and be understood to include *ante mortem* execution by crucifixion or impalement on a pole.

Chapter 4 examines Jewish magical traditions that incorporate crucifixion symbols and artifacts. Chapman notes that placing the sign of the cross on funerary items was commonly practiced in ancient Jewish communities as magical tokens, but these were not associated with crucifixion (pp. 184–85). Nevertheless, Jewish magic did use crucifixion objects as charms and in formulae and perhaps would have believed these items to have had magical properties. Chapman concludes this section by pointing out that the image of the cross did become associated with the crucifixion (and that specifically of Jesus) later in some sectors of early Christianity (p. 185).

Chapter 5 discusses latent crucifixion imagery in ancient Jewish and pagan literature. He notes Philo's allegorical use of suspension imagery to represent a hedonic lifestyle and ignorance (pp. 186–87) and the rabbinic use of this imagery to signify banditry in proverbial formulations. He points out that in rabbinic casuistic law crucifixion served as an "extreme case by which one can test the application of rabbinic legal practices" (p. 195). He concludes this section with a brief discussion of latent crucifixion imagery evident in rabbinic commentary concerning the binding of Isaac (Gen 22:6) and the paschal lamb in which (in both cases) the language is suggestive of crucifixion.

Chapter 6 concludes the first section of the book. It contains a synopsis of the book to this point, concluding that by the Roman period crucifixion themes in Jewish literature generally corresponded to the larger Graeco-Roman context of banditry, rebellion, and shame (pp. 218–19). However, themes such as innocent suffering are unique to the Jewish world (p. 219).

Chapter 7 (part 2) focuses on Jewish perceptions that were applied to Jesus' crucifixion and their impact on early Christianity, concluding that Jewish perceptions were utilized polemically against the early church as suggested by the reaction of the church to assaults against Jesus' messianic identity (p. 223). As is evident from early anti-Christian propaganda from the period, categories of negative implications of crucifixion such as banditry, rebellion, magic, blasphemy most probably formed the Jewish polemic against the early church (p. 241). Early church literature indicates an awareness of these perceptions and "molded them within a commitment to the proclamation of the crucified Christ" (p. 262).

This work is a revision of Chapman's doctoral dissertation written at the University of Cambridge. His project is unique, his approach is fresh, and his reading of ancient sources is sound. It is an excellent book for students of early Judaic literature, and I would recommend it as an important contribution to biblical and rabbinic studies. However, I have questions about the propinquity of some of the sources cited for their influences on early Christian thought concerning crucifixion. In addition, I would also like to have seen some explanation of the Jewish philosophy of criminal justice and whether execution was meant to be prolonged and excruciating (as crucifixion was designed to

be) or quick and just. With the exception of these questions, I thought Chapman's book was a good and worthy read.

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*What the New Testament Writers Really Cared About: A Survey of Their Writings.* Edited by Kenneth Berding and Matt Williams. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008, 240 pp., \$24.99 paper.

This text, designed for undergraduate students in biblical survey classes and for use in church adult education programs, is written by fifteen NT professors from twelve conservative and evangelical colleges and universities in the United States. This full-color and visually attractive text is clearly focused on helping the texts of the NT relate to the general concerns and ethos of evangelical students of the Bible in North America.

I found the opening chapter, "Walking in the Sandals of a First-Century Jew," to be helpful in trying to connect the concerns of modern readers with the importance of context and story in the intertestamental period. The overview focuses well on the tumult, concerns, changes, and longings that lead up to the time of the NT.

This introduction is followed by chapters, each of which is dedicated to a NT book or books (John's epistles, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy and Titus are dealt with in three multiple-book chapters). For the most part, the chapters are arranged in canonical order. One exception is that all of John's writings are sequential in the text starting with the Gospel, followed by a chapter on the three epistles, and a third chapter focused on the Revelation. For scholars who prefer to teach the NT in a preferred chronological order, the sequencing of the text, especially for John's writings and the epistles of Paul, is less than helpful but easily overcome by simply using the text "out of order."

There are some features of the text that make it exceptionally helpful to the educator and student. At the beginning of each chapter there is a full-page highlighted box that asks and then comments on four questions: Who? When? Why? Where? These questions are answered from a conservative perspective with a minimum of nuance or a lengthy discourse on the centuries of scholastic research. Even though some evangelical scholars may disagree on aspects of this background material, the text is helpful in moving through academic disputes to focus on the intention of the biblical texts. Classroom teachers always have the liberty to bring their own thoughts, ideas, and preferences into a fair and academic discussion, and this book certainly offers no obstacle to that. Another helpful feature in the text is found at the end of each chapter and is designated as "Key Words for Review." For beginning students in a survey course this can help them discern what is important to focus on in a high-content text.

It is not unusual to find a text that is the fruit of collaborative effort to be a bit uneven in voice, clarity, presuppositional prejudice, and exegetical insight. This text is no different. For instance, the chapter overview of Mark's Gospel deals clearly and helpfully with the issues and options surrounding the "shorter ending" of Mark. However, in the chapter devoted to Revelation, the 19th chapter is eisegetically summarized as predicting "the return of Christ—that is, the 'parousia'—to defeat the forces of the Antichrist at Armageddon" (p. 118). For a text that promotes itself on wanting to "emphasize that *their* concerns—rather than ours—are most important" (p. 6; emphasis original), the text does focus on "ours" in some significant ways throughout the text. Yet the text does make a commendable effort to help students connect the ancient texts with contemporary discipleship, witness, and mission.

However, in evaluation of the same two chapters, the chapter on Mark does not deal with the “Markan sandwich” structure of Mark’s Gospel even though it does unpack both the messianic secret and the dullness of the disciple’s faith well. Also, the chapter on the Revelation includes a well-done two-page chart comparing the texts of origins in Genesis to the restoration of creation at the end of the Revelation. This contribution will help students to see the biblical text as truly one story with a beginning and an end that make sense. Hopefully, this will help students “connect the dots” between the embedded narratives of the story.

One way contemporary concerns surface throughout the text is through highlighted side-boxes (they are not long enough to be called side-bars) that make a statement or ask a question. For instance, in dealing with Matthew’s concern for the establishment of the church, a side-box states, “Matthew would challenge us to rekindle our awareness that ministry in the church has eternal significance.” In an age where evangelical institutions and educators rarely focus on church as a place of ministry, this side-box might create a lively discussion in the classroom. Many of these side-boxes begin with “If John were here” or “If Paul were here.” Since students often read side-bars and boxed summaries before they read the text, these questions may help them develop a heightened sense of the relevance of the biblical texts.

Another strength of the text is that each chapter is fairly succinct. In addition, although we may complain that our pet idea, insight, or soap box is not included, for the undergraduate survey class or the congregational Sunday school class, the relative brevity of the textbook helps free up time for the student to actually read the NT. This textbook will help them read the biblical text with a bit more of an ear for the first century, its concerns, and its people.

The text would have been strengthened by the addition of discussion questions at the end of each chapter and a summary glossary as an appendix. These additions would help provide more pedagogical structure for laity teaching in the church and adjunct instructors working with university students. The text is attractive, and its photos include ancient artifacts and the ruins of biblical sites, which are expected, but also more than a few scenes of churches today in ancient places. All through the text the focus on the church in witness, worship, and mission is highlighted, and in this the text definitely meets its goal of focusing on “What the New Testament Authors Really Cared About.”

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*Divine Instruction in Early Christianity.* By Stephen E. Witmer. WUNT 2/246. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008, xiii + 237 pp., €54.00 paper.

This monograph is a published version of Witmer’s 2007 Ph.D. thesis. In it he provides “an investigation of one aspect of early Christian self-understanding: the conviction current among some early followers of Jesus that they had been, and were being, taught by God, in fulfillment of OT prophetic promises” (p. 1). Witmer’s thesis states, “This aspect of early Christian self-understanding was an important one, and has relevance for an appreciation of the eschatology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology and hermeneutics of the earliest Christian communities” (p. 1).

Having introduced his topic in chapter 1, Witmer examines divine instruction in the OT in chapter 2, paying particular attention to Isa 54:13 and Jer 31:34, two passages that, according to Witmer, are quoted directly in or are the foundation of verses like John 6:45 and 1 Thess 4:9. In chapter 3, Witmer discusses divine instruction in the DSS,

Philo, Josephus, the apocrypha, and the OT Greek pseudepigrapha. In chapters 4–9, Witmer examines the role and function of divine instruction in the Johannine, Pauline, and Matthean writings. Throughout these chapters, he asks three specific questions of these texts: (1) How does each author understand the fulfillment of the promises of eschatological divine instruction? Included in Witmer's discussions of this question are additional inquiries concerning the relationship between Jesus' teaching and the teaching of God as well as the role of the Spirit in divine instruction. (2) What is the content and function of divine instruction? (3) Does divine instruction obviate the need for human teaching?

In chapter 4, Witmer posits that John in the Fourth Gospel combines "the didactic terminology of the common tradition with his own concept of revelation. According to the Fourth Gospel, Jesus' teaching (properly understood) is revelation" (p. 65). When he refers to Jesus' teaching as revelation, Witmer simply is stating that Jesus' teaching is direct communication from God, a claim that is "quite striking" since learning and revelation normally "belong to two different spheres" (p. 65). Witmer notes that learning usually "derives from human efforts to communicate revelation," accounting for the marked difference between the two. Additionally, he argues in this chapter that the Fourth Gospel contains several references to the teaching of God and of the Spirit that are found nowhere in the Synoptic tradition. As a result, in the Fourth Gospel "revelation is distinctively described with didactic terminology" (p. 65).

Witmer utilizes John 3:1–15 and 13:13–14 to demonstrate that Jesus is the teacher par excellence. In the first text, Jesus, the teacher from above, is contrasted with Nicodemus, the teacher of Israel who cannot understand earthly things (John 3:10, 12). In the second text, Jesus is called "teacher" by his disciples, whom he is preparing both for his forthcoming departure and the Spirit's impending entrance. These texts display Jesus' superiority as a teacher, and "his identity as a teacher is explicitly connected to his origin from God in ways not mentioned in the synoptics" (p. 74).

In chapter 5, Witmer discusses the fulfillment of Isa 54:13 in the Fourth Gospel by saying that the evangelist understood Isa 54:13 as a prophecy of direct, unmediated divine instruction, analogous to the direct divine instruction at Sinai and by interpreting this prophecy as fulfilled through the teaching of Jesus and the Holy Spirit (p. 88). Later in this chapter and throughout chapter 6, Witmer makes two claims concerning the relationship between the teachings of Jesus and the teachings of God that, at first, might seem contradictory. Witmer acknowledges that Jesus mediated God's teaching but also maintains that Jesus' teaching is direct divine instruction, because Jesus obeys the Father completely and teaches only those things that he hears from the Father. Consequently, those who hear Jesus' teachings and receive them both hear and receive direct divine instruction as is described in Isa 54:13 and Jer 31:34. Also in chapter 6, Witmer employs John 3:1–15 and 7:14–19 to clarify that the most important, though certainly not the only, purpose of divine instruction in the Fourth Gospel is to reveal the correct interpretation of specific Scriptures. In this way, those who accepted Jesus' divinely revealed interpretation of Scripture understood it properly, whereas the unbelieving Jews did not, because they failed to recognize the Christological significance of Scripture.

In chapter 7, Witmer describes divine instruction in the Johannine letters, paying special attention to the way in which divine instruction affects the need for human teaching. Witmer concludes that the anointing described in 1 John 2:20, 27 is the Spirit; thus, the ones who accept the Spirit's teaching do not need human teachers to mediate divine teaching. Human teaching is not abolished, of course, but it is seen quite clearly as secondary to the divine instruction provided by the Spirit.

Chapters 8 and 9 look at the Pauline and Matthean understanding of divine instruction respectively. Each chapter only discusses one passage since didactic terminology is

paired with a reference to God in two specific places, namely, 1 Thess 4:9 and Matt 23:8–10. In the verse in 1 Thessalonians, Paul tells his readers that they have been taught by the Spirit to love one another. In Matthew 23, Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is the messianic teacher prophesied in the OT but also the Son of God. After his analysis in the first 9 chapters, Witmer summarizes some of his most significant findings in chapter 10.

Witmer's depiction of divine instruction is especially helpful as it relates to its occurrences in the OT and NT. His method for defining texts that describe divine instruction is to study those texts that combine a reference to God with didactic terminology and then to add to the discussion those texts that appear to convey a similar concept even if they do not use this specific terminology. This clear definition of the rather broad term of divine instruction, along with the use of this definition to interpret both OT and NT texts, is the greatest strength of Witmer's work. Another positive aspect of this monograph is that Witmer allows each text or group of texts to present differing facets of divine instruction without forcing the texts to fit into an artificial unity. Thus, John's understanding of divine instruction is not forced to sound exactly like Paul's.

Witmer's work, however, is not without its deficiencies. Portions of chapter 3, for instance, contribute scarcely little to the understanding or definition of divine instruction. While his presentation of divine instruction in the DSS is both extensive and beneficial (pp. 28–42), his discussion of it in Josephus, the apocrypha, and the pseudepigrapha is so scant (due to the appropriate terminology not appearing often enough in these sources) that perhaps this section of the monograph could have been removed or relegated to a short discussion in the footnotes. A second and more notable weakness in this work is the insignificant amount of space that Witmer devotes to the second half of his thesis, namely, the way in which divine understanding relates to the eschatology, Christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, and hermeneutics of first-century Christianity. This portion of Witmer's task is consigned to the concluding chapter of the work, and each characteristic receives surprisingly little discussion (pp. 179–82). Certainly there is some dialogue about Christology and pneumatology in specific passages in the monograph; nonetheless, none of the five characteristics highlighted in the second part of Witmer's thesis appears to receive adequate attention throughout the work.

Despite its weaknesses, Witmer's work is profitable in that it is, as Witmer points out, the only study of divine instruction that encapsulates its role in the OT, NT, and other important Greek and Jewish literature. Anyone interested in gaining a greater understanding of the role of divine instruction in the related literature will find this book to be quite helpful.

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*Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels.* By Kenneth E. Bailey. Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2008, 443 pages, \$23.00 paper.

For most NT exegetes the study of Middle Eastern cultural factors that go into understanding the Bible is an esoteric aspiration; though desirable, it seems all but unattainable. Yet competent help is available. Kenneth E. Bailey's *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes* culminates 60 years lived in the Middle East with this latest offering. His premise is simple and difficult to deny: those whose own culture and daily life are closest to the biblical world are most likely to understand and correctly interpret the Gospel

writings. So Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic commentaries ought to be taken seriously rather than relegated, as they have been for a millennium and a half, to the outer circles of source materials for Gospel interpretation.

He mentions as his own sources for exegetical work early Targums (paraphrases of Scripture in Syriac and Aramaic), ancient commentaries in Syriac and Arabic, and about a half dozen Coptic and Arabic scholars whose work dates from about AD 1250 to 2006. He refers most often to one Ibn al-Tayyidb of Baghdad (died 1043). Ibn al-Tayyidb read Greek fluently, translated the NT from Syriac to Arabic, and wrote extensive commentaries on both the OT and the NT. If Bailey is to be believed, the West has ignored a major biblical scholar for a thousand years.

A childhood in Egypt and 40 years of teaching in Egypt, Jerusalem, Lebanon, and Cyprus contributed to Bailey's life-long interest in the cultural backgrounds of the NT and his understanding of that milieu. Best known for his twin volumes *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasant Eyes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976, 1980), he has published over 150 scholarly articles in English and Arabic and over a half dozen books. His writings have been translated and published in more than 20 languages. After 40 years of teaching in seminaries in the Middle East, he has taught more recently at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Princeton, Columbia, Dubuque, and McCormack. Since 1997 he has served as Canon Theologian of the Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church, USA.

This book supplies a test case for his postulate that the Gospels are best understood through the eyes of those who are native to the land and culture that was Jesus' home. It is neither a systematic nor a biblical theology, but rather a potpourri of exegetical insights from the Gospels. It is organized under a half dozen headings: the birth of Jesus (about 40 pages), the beatitudes (30 pages), the Lord's prayer (about 40 pages), [three] dramatic actions of Jesus (about 50 pages), Jesus and women (about 90 pages), and the parables of Jesus (about 150 pages).

Bailey's contribution to our understanding comes as much from form analysis as it does from his explanations of cultural artifacts and customs. In other words, his own decades steeped in Middle Eastern poetry and literature make him far more sensitive to the patterns and rhythms of Jesus' teachings and the Gospels' composition than most of the rest of western readers. While we may recognize "Hebrew parallelism" here and there outside the OT, Bailey's fascination with chiasmic forms of composition causes him to see them everywhere. Not all readers will be persuaded by his presentations, but one has to admit that the implications are far-reaching. If Bailey is correct in seeing chiasmic form in all those many, many texts, then their meanings will necessarily shift. In western logic, the strongest argument appears last; in eastern circuitous rhetoric, the strongest argument appears in the middle, sandwiched on either side by parallel chiasmic steps of first ascending, then descending, importance.

Time after time Bailey unveils original contextual clues to the meaning of phrases or events that have become so familiar to us that we allegedly miss what Jesus was actually referring to. For example, when we hear the beatitude "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt 5:5), we inevitably think of the referent of "earth" as the entire inhabited planet, perhaps in the eschatological age. Not so fast, says Bailey. Remember that הָ אֶרֶץ is probably a translation of the Aramaic *ha eretz*, which in turn would, in Israelite minds listening to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, have referred primarily to "the land of promise," that narrow strip of land between the Jordan and Mediterranean promised to the children of Abraham. So Jesus was more likely speaking a definitive answer into the social context of the day, says Bailey, when rich plutocrat Sadducees, Herodians, zealots, and displaced poor tenant farmers argued the burning issue of "to whom does *this Land*, promised to the heirs of Abraham, belong?" (p. 72). It is *that* question ("Who shall inherit it?") that Jesus answers with authority.

Bailey's interpretation is impressive, and almost persuasive, that is, until one notices that the same word for earth is used three more times in Matthew 5, five times in the near context of the Sermon on the Mount, and 23 times in all in the book of Matthew—*always* with the universal and comprehensive implications that come with being used in expressions like “the ends of the earth” or being paired often in the construct “heaven and earth.” Nowhere in Matthew is “the land” in the limited sense suggested by Bailey invoked by the context.

Another example is when Bailey purports to bring fresh insight to Joseph's state of mind as he learned of Mary's pregnancy and was “disturbed” (according to the oldest Arabic translation of the passage) by it. Bailey tries to show that this really implies anger, even wrath, a more natural supposition of the man's state than the usual depictions of him as quietly disappointed but congenial and accepting of Mary's condition. Yet it is hard to grant credibility to such revisions of traditional understandings of the text when based on a single piece of textual evidence.

On the other hand, when he proposes that the wise men who came from the East to honor the new-born King of the Jews were Arabs, not Babylonians or Persians, he not only demonstrates that the three gifts specified are all of Arabic, not Babylonian, provenance but also shows that Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Clement of Rome all corroborated that theory in the first and early second century. Such revisions of long-held assumptions are welcome—when they are supported by sufficient proof. It is heady wine to find unexplored and fresh suggestions about passages worn familiar with time and repeated exposure (what Nietzsche called “the originally clear image on the coin of expression rubbed smooth”). Yet one has to corroborate new findings carefully.

This book could serve as material for an adult or student Sunday School class. Laid out in simple format for easy absorption by readers, the author's explanations of his findings require no formal training to follow and understand them. He knows that Aramaic, Syriac, Arabic, and so forth are unknown territory even for many readers in the guild of biblical scholars. So he makes the material gleaned from esoteric sources as accessible as possible. Particularly helpful are the summaries provided at the conclusion of each chapter. Each salient point the author has made in the course of his argument is enumerated in three to five short, clear sentences. (Do not skip over these; sometimes Bailey slips new material into the “summaries” that he has not introduced in the foregoing argument!)

Ever since his twin volumes *Poet and Peasant* and *Through Peasant Eyes* came out in 1976 and 1980, Bailey's reputation has continued to gain currency. Bailey's work perhaps suffered at first in academic circles from the premature judgment that it was quirky and eccentric. His oft-repeated claims that over 15 million Arab Christians live in the Middle East and that a whole body of Middle Eastern NT scholarly work has been ignored for a millennium and a half are often naturally met with astonishment, sometimes with skepticism. Yet the scholarly world has vindicated many of his exegetical insights. Rather than quirky eccentricity, his work opens a window on a whole other world of hitherto ignored biblical interpreters from the East. He implicitly poses the simple question: who is more likely to understand, identify with, and accurately explain Gospel narratives—a native Middle Easterner speaking a language very close to Jesus' maternal Aramaic, living a daily life similar to that of Jesus of Nazareth and his contemporaries, immersed in a culture like that which forms the Palestinian background of the Gospels or an urban European or American living at 2000 years remove from anything remotely similar to the Gospels' milieu.

The insights provided by Bailey from ancient Arabic or Syriac translations and commentaries on the Gospels are a breath of fresh air after the stale speculative aridity of

much of what is called “Jesus research.” This most recent book may very well establish Bailey’s legacy beyond dispute.

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*Who Do My Opponents Say That I Am? An Investigation of the Accusations against the Historical Jesus.* Edited by Scot McKnight and Joseph B. Modica. Library of New Testament Studies 327. London: T & T Clark, 2008, xi + 175 pp., \$130.00.

McKnight and Modica make it clear that this collection of essays, written by several NT scholars, attempts to uncover a “Christology from the side.” Rather than investigate specific claims made about Jesus with regards to his exalted status (a “Christology from above”) or claims that were made about him that focused on Jesus’ humanity (a “Christology from below”), these essays guide readers to consider what those who opposed Jesus thought of him by understanding the names (or “labels”) that were given to Jesus. As the editors note, the essays extend an approach that was begun by Malina and Neyrey in their monograph *Calling Jesus Names: The Social Value of Labels in Matthew* (Sonoma: Polebridge, 1988). Students now have a resource that examines not only the evidence from the other Synoptics but also explores John’s Gospel as a source that contains reliable historical evidence about how Jesus was viewed by his opponents.

The essays investigate seven labels used to characterize Jesus negatively. These labels accused or mocked Jesus as “Law-Breaker” (Michael Bird), “Demon-Possessed” (Dwight Sheets), “Glutton and Drunkard” (Joseph Modica), “Blasphemer” (Darrell Bock), “False Prophet” (James McGrath), “King of the Jews” (Lynn Cohick), and “Illegitimate Son” (Scot McKnight). Each essay is well written and demonstrates thorough scholarship and engagement with recent studies. Readers will find the essays by Bird, Cohick, and McKnight to be particularly provocative and fresh.

Michael Bird’s essay on “Jesus as Law-Breaker” evaluates how the Pharisees perceived Jesus as a violator of Levitical rules because of what he said about food purity. Bird notes that the food laws were connected in Jewish writings generally with the idea of Israel’s election, and he contends that Jewish groups mainly observed the purity laws as a means to bring about the end of the age and the restoration of Israel. He agrees with those scholars who argue that Jesus would have been a Torah-compliant Jew but that the evidence of the Gospels point to a Jesus who challenged the legal interpretations of his opponents. He contends that this is most clearly seen in (1) Jesus’ table-fellowship with sinners; (2) Jesus’ touching of lepers and dead people through his healing ministry; and (3) Jesus’ declaration that only what comes out of a person’s heart brings defilement (Mark 7:15). The major portion of his essay sets out the historical background for understanding the pericope in Mark 7:1–23.

Bird makes several correct and important observations about this text. First, he observes that the saying in Mark 7:15 is not a rejection of the food laws but is making a point in a comparative sense (“not only . . . but also”), which other commentators have described as a “relative negative” (e.g. Caddoux). Second, Bird notes that it is “misleading and inaccurate” to suggest that by this statement Jesus was positioning moral laws against cultic laws. Such contrasts would have been foreign to the minds of first-century Jews, including Jesus, who would have seen all of Torah as an integrated and indissoluble unity. Third, it would not have been unheard of for a Jew to relativize ceremonial laws under other laws. Examples of such a practice are plentiful and can be found in rabbinic, sapiential, and apocalyptic writings.

However, what the essay does not make clear is how Bird on the one hand can observe that Jesus' saying functions in a similar fashion to how other Jews expressed the priority of one law over another and then on the other hand claim that this saying reflects a "radical redefinition of purity" (p. 24). Bird does not satisfactorily answer how Jesus' statement about defilement, which he believes must have been deliberately ambiguous, was not understood by Jesus' Jewish disciples until the arrival of Paul's mission to the Gentiles. The evidence is not clear that Jesus' statement was considered to be thoroughly radical by his opponents (no objection is ever recorded in the Gospels), nor interpreted as such by Jesus' earliest followers.

Lynn Cohick's essay on "Jesus as King of the Jews" is the only investigation into a derogatory label for Jesus that was offered by a Gentile, the words Pilate had fixed upon Jesus' cross indicating the crime for which he was being executed. On the basis of the criterion of dissimilarity, Cohick argues that the *titulus* "King of the Jews" is historically authentic since it was not a Christological confession. She then uses social-scientific methodology to uncover what can be discerned by the "interaction between colonial powers and leaders of the dominated group." In particular, Cohick's essay concentrates on the social significance of "collaboration" and "political challenges of the disenfranchised." She argues that the sense of this label is best ascertained by seeing Jesus' words and actions in light of their political significance, by considering how Pilate may have used the *titulus* in an ironic way, and by critiquing the chief priests' interpretation of Pilate's words.

Cohick asks readers to imagine the kind of person that would most likely have been executed under the charge of being "King of the Jews." Such a person would have led some type of military action against Rome and would have claimed to be a descendant from a royal Jewish blood line. Would-be Jewish kings, as least those known to us from Josephus's writings, were also men who demonstrated fearlessness and physical strength and made their royal aspirations clear. Since the Gospels do not portray Jesus as an insurrectionist, Cohick believes that two incidents in Jesus' life deserve closer attention if Pilate's use of the *titulus* "King of the Jews" is going to make sense: Jesus' triumphal entry and the "temple cleansing." Cohick argues that these two events, when understood in the context of how Second Temple Jews interpreted Scripture, point to Jesus making a claim to the title "Messiah" and challenging the status quo of Israel's political and religious leadership.

These two actions and Jesus' public denunciation of the chief priests were perceived by the temple authorities as a real threat to their hegemony with Roman provincial rulers. The "King of the Jews" label was Pilate's way of mocking those who thought they could make a serious challenge to the political collaboration between the Roman and temple authorities that secured Rome's dominance in the region.

The final essay in the collection is by Scot McKnight on "Jesus as *Mamzer* ('Illegitimate Son')." McKnight explores the tradition that is implied in all four Gospels that people questioned the circumstances surrounding Jesus' birth. In Mark 6:3 Jesus is given the unusual designation "son of Mary," when it was customary for Jews to identify a Jewish man with regard to who his father was. In Matthew and Luke, the circumstances of Jesus' birth are explained as the result of a miraculous conception that occurred before cohabiting with Joseph. In John 8:41, Jesus' opponents protest that they are not "illegitimate children," insinuating that Jesus was perceived to be an "illegitimate child." In addition to these, one could add other extra-canonical sources (rabbinic, Christian, and Gnostic) that indicate Jesus' Jewish heritage was suspect.

McKnight interacts with previous studies that offer explanations as to what would have been meant by the designation *mamzer*. In particular, McKnight interacts in detail with the work of Bruce Chilton (*Rabbi Jesus* [New York: Doubleday, 2000]). Chilton reconstructed what Jesus' ministry was like in light of the social and psychological

effects of Jesus being labeled a *mamzer* and subsequently being ostracized by most other Jews who were aware of his questionable lineage.

McKnight warns readers that the law prohibiting a *mamzer* and his descendants from being admitted into the covenant people (Deut 23:2) has no definition or explanation in its literary context as to what constitutes a *mamzer* and what types of interactions are included in the prohibition. The way this law was interpreted by later Jewish writings compounds the problem, since Jews identified *mamzerim* in many different ways, including children conceived of a mixed marriage, of incest, of violent parents, of betrothed but unmarried parents, or of parents guilty of theological apostasy. With the exception of a child conceived of betrothed but unmarried parents, the evidence of the Gospels does not lend any other possible cause for labeling Jesus as an “illegitimate child.” McKnight concludes his essay by noting three elements that can securely come from the conclusion that Jesus was considered a *mamzer*: Jesus was attacked not on the basis of what he taught but on the basis of his origins; Jesus’ origin was attacked because he attacked their legitimacy as Israel’s spiritual leaders; and Jesus’ Jewish heritage was rejected in response to his claim that he had a supernatural origin.

For those who interact with the wide array of Christologies from the top and bottom, these Christological essays “from the side” (i.e. what insults Jesus’ contemporaries voiced about him) will engage the discipline in a new direction. The collection reminds readers that even hostile witnesses do reflect within their slanderous labels reliable details about the historical Jesus.

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*Stories with Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus.* By Klyne R. Snodgrass. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xviii + 846 pp., \$50.00.

Klyne R. Snodgrass, Paul W. Brandel Professor of New Testament Studies at North Park Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois, is a familiar voice in parable research with contributions such as a monograph on *The Parable of the Wicked Tenants* (WUNT 1/27; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1983) or the entry “Parable” in the *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, to name but a few. In this current volume, *Stories with Intent* (henceforth *Stories*), Snodgrass provides what he describes as “a resource book for the parables” (p. xi). His practical rationale for offering this volume is clearly stated in the preface: “Anyone who is going to preach or teach the parables should be fully informed about the world of the parables, the intent of their teller, and the discussion about them in modern literature” (p. xi).

The structure of Snodgrass’s *Stories* contains two introductory sections followed by nine portions devoted to thirty-three parables, organized under nine thematic headings (see below). Following this there is a brief epilogue and six appendices (all unnumbered): (1) occurrences of *parabolē* in the NT; (2) occurrences of the verb *māšal* in the OT; (3) occurrences of the noun *māšal* in the OT; (4) occurrences of *parabolē* in the LXX; (5) occurrences of *parabolē* in the Apostolic Fathers; and (6) classification of parables. Nearly two-hundred pages of densely packed endnotes follow the appendices (pp. 579–770). A bibliography of primary and secondary sources and two indices (authors and ancient works) close out the volume.

*Stories* opens with an “Introduction to the Parables of Jesus” (pp. 1–35). It offers a brief survey of formative scholarly discussion of Jesus’ parables, the meaning of a

parable, classification of parables, characteristics of and distribution of the parables, interpretation of the parables, and critical assumptions. Snodgrass describes a parable as (in most cases) “an expanded analogy used to convince and persuade” (p. 9). In terms of classification, Snodgrass offers six designations (he leaves aside aphoristic sayings): (1) similitudes; (2) interrogative parables; (3) double indirect narrative parables; (4) juridical parables; (5) single indirect parables; and (6) “how much more” parables. As for characteristics, Jesus’ parables (1) are brief; (2) are marked by simplicity and symmetry; (3) focus mostly on humans; (4) are fictional descriptions of everyday life; (5) are engaging; (6) often contain elements of reversal; (7) usually offer the crucial matter at the end; (8) are told into a context; (9) are theocentric; (10) frequently allude to OT texts; and (11) appear in larger collections of parables.

With respect to distribution, Snodgrass focuses on thirty-three parables. He further offers eleven guidelines for their interpretation. As far as critical assumptions, he considers the parables the bedrock of Jesus’ teaching and the surest place to access it. Snodgrass considers the Gospels to have been written for a broad audience rather than for specific local communities. He also maintains that parables do not contain the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus but rather preserve the remembered Jesus (Dunn), the historic-biblical Christ (Kähler). Snodgrass does not commit himself to a particular theory of Synoptic interrelations, contending that analysis of the text must take precedence over and not be determined by a theory of interrelations. Concerning the Gospel of Thomas, he considers it to be a second-century product of secondary orality, dependent on the canonical Gospels.

A second introductory section surveys “Parables in the Ancient World” (pp. 37–59). Included in this survey are representative examples of parables drawn from the OT, early Jewish writings, Greco-Roman writings, the early church, and later Jewish writings. The overview suggests to Snodgrass that Jesus was not the first or only person to use parables. While parables are not distinctive to Jesus, Snodgrass maintains that there is no evidence that anyone prior to Jesus used parables as frequently and forcefully as he.

The heart of *Stories* offers over five-hundred pages of detailed analysis on thirty-three parables (pp. 61–564). Snodgrass organizes these parables under nine thematic categories:

- (1) Grace and Responsibility (two parables): The Unforgiving Servant (Matt 18:23–35) and The Two Debtors (Luke 7:41–43);
- (2) Parables of Lostness (three parables): The Lost Sheep (Matt 18:12–14/Luke 15:4–7), The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8–10), and The Compassionate Father and His Two Lost Sons (Luke 15:11–32);
- (3) The Parable of the Sower and the Purpose of Parables (one parable): Matt 13:3–23; Mark 4:3–20; Luke 8:5–15;
- (4) Parables of the Present Kingdom in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 13 (six parables): The Growing Seed (Mark 4:26–29), The Wheat and the Weeds (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43), The Mustard Seed (Matt 13:31–32; Mark 4:30–32; Luke 13:18–19), The Leaven (Matt 13:33; Luke 13:20–21), The Treasure (Matt 13:44), and The Pearl (Matt 13:45–46);
- (5) Parables Specifically about Israel (five parables): The Barren Fig Tree (Luke 13:6–9), The Two Sons (Matt 21:28–32), The Wicked Tenants (Matt 21:33–46; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19; *Gos. Thom.* 65–66), The Wedding Banquet and the Feast (Matt 22:1–14; Luke 14:15–24; *Gos. Thom.* 64; the latter are treated as two parables);
- (6) Parables about Discipleship (five parables): The Two Builders (Matt 7:24–27/Luke 6:47–49), The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), The Workers in

- the Vineyard (Matt 20:1–16), and The Tower Builder and the Warring King (Luke 14:28–32; the latter two are treated together);
- (7) Parables about Money (three parables): The Rich Fool (Luke 12:16–21), The Unjust Steward (Luke 16:1–13), and The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31);
  - (8) Parables concerning God and Prayer (three parables): The Friend at Midnight (Luke 11:5–8), The Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1–8), and The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9–14);
  - (9) Parables of Future Eschatology (five parables): The Net (Matt 13:47–50), The Ten Virgins (Matt 25:1–13), The Talents and the Minas (Matt 25:14–30; Luke 19:11–27) (treated as two parables), and The Sheep and the Goats (Matt 25:31–46).

Snodgrass's treatment of these thirty-three parables customarily follows, in its fullest form, a ten-part structure (with contraction of one or more of these elements in some instances; e.g. the fifth element below): (1) parable title (with references); (2) identification of the parable type; (3) interpretive issues requiring attention; (4) helpful primary source material (including, in many instances, canonical material [OT/NT], early Jewish writings, early Christian writings, Greco-Roman writings, and later Jewish writings); (5) comparison of accounts (where relevant); (6) textual features worth noting; (7) cultural information; (8) explanation of the parable (including "Options for Interpretation" as well as "Decisions on the Issues"); (9) adapting the parable; and (10) bibliographical resources for further reading.

In a brief epilogue (pp. 565–66) Snodgrass underlines his principal concerns: to keep people in the context of Jesus' life and to insist that the parables be heard in terms of Jesus' purpose with first-century Israel. While the parables inform, their primary purpose is to elicit a response either to move positively toward Jesus and his message or negatively away from them. They are further concerned with forming the identity of readers: to lead people to understand grace and its demands and to illicit an appropriate response.

In evaluating *Stories* it is important to recognize that Snodgrass's work is neither a commentary on the parables nor a focused guide to preaching them. There are other resources available for these purposes (e.g. Arland J. Hultgren, *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary* [The Bible in Its World; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000] and Craig L. Blomberg, *Preaching the Parables: From Responsible Interpretation to Powerful Proclamation* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004]). Rather, the intention of Snodgrass's volume is, according to the subtitle, a comprehensive guide to the parables and, according to the preface, a resource book on the parables.

Evaluated as a comprehensive guide, this volume raises questions as to the principles of inclusion and exclusion. For instance, it is not clear why Snodgrass excludes aphoristic sayings from treatment, particularly given his inclusion of them in his classification of parables (p. 11). Additionally, given his definition of parable (p. 9), one would think that John 10:1–18 (good shepherd) and 15:1–8 (true vine) also merit some attention. By way of comparison, it is interesting to note that in his overview article in *DJG* mentioned above, Snodgrass identified nearly fifty parables, including the two aforementioned Johannine passages. The exclusion of aphorisms and the two Johannine passages raise questions about the subtitle of the volume as comprehensive. It would have been further helpful to see a clearer correlation between his literary categorization of the parables (pp. 9–17 and Appendix [6]) and the thematic headings into which he organizes them for treatment on pages 61–564.

Evaluated as a resource book on what Snodgrass does include for treatment, by contrast, this volume is simply unrivaled in the wealth of primary resources and valuable

analysis it provides on the parables for the seasoned scholar, student, and pastor. Throughout, *Stories* exemplifies detailed work on the texts of the parables, acquaintance with the literature and culture of the ancient world of the parables, a thorough knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus (reflected in helpful observations on e.g. pp. 246, 477–82, 492–94), familiarity with the history of interpretation (succinctly summarized in the portion on “Options for Interpretation”), and interaction with a wide range of secondary literature (much of which, unfortunately, is embedded in endnotes). Additionally, in discussing matters of redaction, Snodgrass is careful to distinguish between the content of the parable and its editorial shaping, thereby avoiding the common default assumption of too many scholars that editorial activity automatically signifies inauthenticity. For example, in discussing the wheat and the weeds (Matt 13:24–30, 36–43), Snodgrass wryly comments, “Without question, the interpretation . . . evidences Matthean stylistic traits and themes, but that is to be expected and does not show anything about the origin of the material. Matthew has Mattheanisms” (p. 209)! He later observes, “[G]ranted the shaping by Matthew, I think we hear the voice of Jesus in both the parable and its interpretation” (p. 211). Of particular value to pastors and teachers, moreover, is Snodgrass’s evident concern to provide readers with guidelines on adapting the parables.

A couple of additions might have made the text even more serviceable as a resource book. First, for students and busy pastors, a brief glossary of potentially unfamiliar terms like “diapanous,” “syncrisis,” and “*nimshal*” might have been helpful, particularly to aid readers who will use the book primarily as a reference volume. A subject index would also have been beneficial for those interested in pursuing major themes. Additionally, numbering the appendices would have been useful, and would in all likelihood have helped to avoid the error in reference on p. 17 (where “see Appendix 5” should refer readers to Appendix 6).

Overall, this is an impressive and commendable piece of work that will hopefully encourage pastors, teachers, and students to engage the parables in the context of Jesus and further to apply them responsibly to their own contemporary contexts. His closing statement about Jesus’ parables is a fitting way to conclude: “They deserve all the attention we will give them” (p. 566).

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*John and Empire: Initial Explorations.* By Warren Carter. London: T & T Clark, 2008, xii + 423 pp., \$35.42 paper.

There has been a growing trend to read the NT documents as texts of Roman imperial negotiation. Warren Carter is not new to this discussion, since he has provided several contributions in this regard, most notably his *Matthew and Empire* (Harrisburg: Trinity Press International, 2001) and *The Roman Empire and the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2006). He has now applied his “empire” reading strategy to the Gospel of John. Between a brief “Introduction and Assumptions” and “Conclusion,” Carter examines the empire motif in John over twelve chapters divided unequally between two parts.

In his “Introduction and Assumptions,” Carter explains the primary argument of the book: “Throughout this study I argue that John’s Gospel with its ‘rhetoric of distance’ is a text of imperial negotiation. It seeks to make normative for Jesus-believers a distanced relationship to Roman imperial power in provincial Ephesus, resisting those who negotiate the empire with a much more accommodated societal participation”

(p. ix). What seems to be the methodological key for Carter is an emphasis on what he calls “cultural intertextuality,” in which “[t]he Roman Empire was the foreground, not the background, of late first-century daily life” (p. x). Influenced by new historicism, Carter sees the text of John “not merely reflecting a set of historical circumstances but contributing to and constructing a sense of cultural reality that interacts through other conceptualizations of the world and relationships with ‘the actual conditions of its existence’” (p. x). John’s cultural intertextuality, then, is the participation and management of competing forces with a complex textualized universe, and it involves locating this Gospel “within (the text of) society and history” (p. x). Rather than being reductionistic, taking seriously John’s participation in the imperial world means attention not only to the sociopolitical realities but also “to the Gospel’s rich Christology and eschatology. Such a bifurcation of the political and the theological or religious is quite false. . . . In the imperial world there is no such division” (p. x).

In part 1, Carter spends three chapters explaining the “Invisible Rome.” In chapter 1, Carter argues that two dominant reading strategies of John’s Gospel, the “spiritualized” and the “sectarian-synagogal” readings, render Rome invisible (p. 3). The former is an inadequate individualized reading; the latter is an inadequate communal reading. Only a “wider community” reading that recognizes “the dominant community in John’s world,” the Roman Empire, is able to handle the other, inadequate readings. In chapter 2, Carter argues against the “sectarian-synagogal” reading and posits, in contrast, a community in Ephesus that was predominantly “at home in and accommodated to Roman power even while observant of some distinctive practices” (p. 19). Carter’s argument intends to explain how Jewish Jesus-followers could “participate in” Roman imperial power. In sum, there were “not enough boundaries” and “too many bridges” between Jewish Christians and the “late first-century Roman-dominated, Hellenistic, Asian city of Ephesus” (p. 36). Finally, in chapter 3, Carter explicates further the possible Roman Empire experienced by the Johannine Christians in Ephesus. After examining various models for determining the Roman influence on the Jesus-believers, Carter claims that “their lives are marked by significant accommodation” (p. 81). This does not mean that Johannine Christians are fully accommodated but that they are necessarily negotiating imperial power. Carter is locating the Johannine Jesus-believers as participating citizens of two worlds: a synagogue community and the Roman Empire. Carter tries to be careful in defining this participation, not swinging the pendulum from one extreme (sectarian-synagogal reading) to the other (Roman imperial reading): “The synagogue communities to which John’s Jesus-believers belonged generally participated actively in the Roman world though maintaining some distinctive practices” (p. 93).

In part 2, Carter spends nine chapters exploring the exact nature of this two-world participation as it is expressed (implicitly and explicitly) in the Gospel of John. In chapter 4, Carter argues that the Johannine Jesus-believers negotiated the imperial present by turning to the past. By connecting themselves to the greats of the past (Moses, Abraham), Johannine Christians are given credit by which to barter with imperial Rome. In chapter 5, Carter explains further how John mediates between the Jewish and Roman worlds by claiming that the Gospel genre is perfectly capable of performing a critical participation. According to Carter, “the Gospel’s genre simultaneously exhibits both participation in the imperial world as well as critique of its elite commitments while urging an alternative communal identity and existence” (p. 123). In chapter 6, Carter examines how the plot of John guides Jesus-believers in their imperial negotiation. According to Carter, John’s plot “comprises a further dimension of the Gospel’s rhetoric of distance. With its focus on Jesus crucified by Rome, the plot plays a significant part in the writers’ strategy to distance Jesus-believers from too great an accommodation

to Rome's Empire" (p. 144). In chapter 7, Carter argues that the primary titles for Jesus in John's Gospel are used both to "imitate and contest imperial claims" (p. 176). In chapter 8, Carter moves from the person of Jesus to the promise of Jesus, showing how the Gospel of John negotiates between Rome eternal and life eternal. "John's notions of eternal life . . . expose and conflict with the norms and claims of elite imperial practices and propaganda" (p. 227). In chapter 9, Carter shows how the Fourth Gospel negotiates between the Father in heaven and the father of the fatherland, the emperor of Rome. Carter continues to describe the rhetoric of distance through which the Gospel negotiates the divine fatherhood. This chapter raises an issue to be addressed below, how the Gospel can only negotiate with and against what it claims. In chapter 10, Carter attempts to show how John's imperial negotiation creates an alternate identity for the Jesus-believers. Here Carter sees the Johannine rhetoric moving the Jesus-believer away from accommodating to Rome, toward an identity rooted in Jesus. In chapter 11, Carter shows further negotiation, this time in a comparison between Jesus and Pilate—two potential "governors." According to Carter, for John's audience the Pilate scene "continues to employ the Gospel's rhetoric of distance in demonstrating that the Roman Empire is not committed to God's purposes but is their enemy. The empire is part of 'the world' that opposes God's agent, Jesus" (p. 311). Finally, in chapter 12, Carter shows how the Gospel continues the "work of negotiating the imperial order by seeking to distance over-accommodated Jesus-believers" (p. 332). Carter ends the volume with a summarizing conclusion, and an appendix concerning Gaius Caligula.

Warren Carter's *John and Empire* serves as an excellent introduction to the recent movement toward reading the NT in light of imperial Rome. Even though Carter has explored this motif or reading strategy in other books of the NT, he has clearly proven himself as a Johannine scholar. Carter's writing is organized and easy to read. He carefully weaves his argument together between chapters and is careful in his presentation of evidence. *John and Empire* is a needed contribution to Johannine studies, especially as it relates to this recent movement regarding imperial Rome. It will be difficult for future work on John's context and influences to ignore Carter's contribution.

As much as Carter's *John and Empire* contributes to the contemporary study of the Fourth Gospel, it is not without its problems. Three problems are worth "negotiating" amidst the promise. First, Carter's ability to "draw out" the imperial negotiation between the Fourth Gospel and its context is necessarily limited to his model. Carter admits as much, but his admission is not the concern. The concern is the implicit and explicit limitations of his model. The hypothetical reconstruction needed to create his model is itself a question that needs to be answered. In the end, Carter runs the risk of over-accommodating a hypothetical model. Second, Carter's appropriation of the imperial Rome model turns into a "have-your-cake-and-eat-it-too" approach. For example, while wanting to show how the Gospel is overtly concerned with accommodating to Rome (and not just Judaism), Carter simultaneously is constantly showing where John does not accommodate. The result is a Roman Gospel that is antithetical to Rome. Such a reading of John might look plausible on a text-to-text basis, but a macro-level reading reveals the numerous contradictions with this approach, even with the constant use of the term "negotiation." This is not necessarily a fault of Carter's but a reflection of the innate circularity of his model. Finally, while Carter appears to have escaped from Jerusalem, the result of his quest is just as unfortunate: an imprisonment in Rome. In other words, while trying to flee a contextual reading of John in which a sectarian community is dealing with a Jewish, synagogal conflict, Carter ends up placing John in an identical conflict, but this time, in the Hellenistic (and Roman) city of Ephesus. Whether "negotiating" against Jerusalem or Rome, Carter still views the Jesus-believers as sectarian, and he is still abstracting (dare we say theologizing) them into the only

safe haven: a Johannine Christianity. Have we a rock and a hard place with Carter? Even in spite of these three concerns, Carter's service is to be noted.

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*Acts*. By Richard I. Pervo. Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009, xxxvi + 810 pp., \$85.00.

The appearance of new Hermeneia volumes usually generates great interest. Although the choice of Richard Pervo to write on Acts does not reflect the current mainstream of Acts scholarship on some significant points, it does call on one known for sustained engagement with it.

Pervo displays his erudition lavishly in his treatment of the Greek text, including text-critical comments and often (though less consistently than Mikeal Parsons) rhetorical observations; he also provides numerous valuable literary insights. (Unfortunately, he sometimes infers that Luke's literary patterning is incompatible with the historical substance of the patterned reports, an inference that cannot hold for ancient historical works more generally.) As we shall note below, his treatment of the second-century Christian context in which he places the work is unsurpassed (though most scholars do not agree with his view on that context).

Pervo also treats the major interpretive questions on various passages, providing numerous secondary sources for readers interested in pursuing these matters more fully. (The author index suggests that he cites over a thousand authors; Fitzmyer's 1998 commentary cites closer to 2000, but most commentators cite far fewer.) While readers will find many of these resources cited elsewhere, those who use Pervo's work need not agree with him on every point to find significant useful information here.

Pervo does not, like some scholars in the past, exclude conservative commentators from the conversation. F. F. Bruce, for example, is treated regularly and respectfully. Pervo initially seems less impressed with Ben Witherington but engages him more respectfully as the commentary progresses. He cites I. Howard Marshall less frequently, but again cites him respectfully and often agrees. (On p. 131 he exploits Marshall's admission of a problem to state the grounds for his own skepticism.) Sometimes he does express dismay at some historically conservative readings, including occasionally absurd examples he chooses to report (e.g. almost mocking William Ramsay's unjustified downplaying of the miraculous character of the earthquake in Acts 16:25). Absurd examples aside, it appears that even the standard conservative respect for Luke's historical integrity is as hard for Pervo to comprehend as is his position for conservative scholars. Nevertheless, Pervo is normally as respectful a dialogue partner as his perspective allows, and he merits respectful dialogue in return.

Pervo does provide much that is useful (though much of what is most useful also appears in other detailed commentaries by Fitzmyer, Johnson, Witherington, and others). Nevertheless, because he is especially known for his thesis that Acts is heavily fictitious and because this approach shapes his treatment of much of Acts, I must devote more of the review to interacting critically with that position. I should note initially, however, that Pervo does recognize some material in Acts as historical. This is especially the case where external sources (such as Paul's letters) corroborate points in Acts, and even elsewhere Pervo does not in every instance take the most skeptical possible position (see e.g. p. 49 on Acts 1:15–23). His skepticism is frequent, however, and related to his view of the work's genre.

Pervo is known for arguing that Acts is a novel. Perhaps influenced by recent discussion of Acts' genre, Pervo in the commentary admits that "Acts is a history" (p. 15). (The majority of Acts scholars hold this view, and this is likely to remain the dominant view in the near future. All the Acts commentaries currently in preparation of which I am aware, including those of Eckhard Schnabel, Stanley Porter, and myself, treat Acts as some form of historiography.) Nevertheless, Pervo so stretches the definition of "history" that he includes in that category *Joseph and Asenath* and the *Alexander Romance* (both of them novels, even if novels about historical characters). He cites "historical criticism" against the view that a historical writer should be given the benefit of the doubt, by which he justifies doubt concerning Luke's claims that we cannot prove.

Unfortunately, were we to adopt this method in other ancient histories, we would know very little about the ancient world, and the approach seems all the more perverse when historical evidence (such as, again, Paul's letters) so often confirms matters in Acts (such as the sequence of Paul's mission). Since Luke could not know what external evidence would survive, should we not assume that he would be roughly as reliable where we cannot test him as where we can? It is not possible to answer Pervo piecemeal (especially in a review) because his hermeneutic of suspicion pervades his commentary, but those who read Acts the way we normally read other ancient historical works will usually find Pervo's skeptical approach untenable.

Because Pervo defines "history" so broadly, he can accept the historical category while also treating Acts as novelistic. I believe that he is correct to observe (with Barrett and others) that Luke, in contrast to the elite ancient historians (whose works were more often propagated and survived), writes on a "popular" level (p. 18). Yet to equate "popular history" with ancient novels (p. 18) is to ignore the conventional boundaries of genres in antiquity. While Luke does narrate adventures, he hardly fabricates them; a brief look at 2 Cor 11:23–33 will indicate that Luke has included only a fraction of Paul's actual "adventures." While Luke mentions signs more often than Paul does, Paul's letters indicate that Luke again reports only a fraction of these (Rom 15:19; 2 Cor 12:12).

Although Pervo notes Haenchen's cynicism, Pervo's own cynicism drips from many pages. Further, though probably no more than Haenchen, Pervo far more often than most commentaries editorializes on the value of Luke's theology or perspectives. Since most critical readers do not depend on commentators as their ethicists or political theorists of choice, they may not appreciate the space Pervo expends offering his opinions. For example, Pervo complains when Luke attributes jealousy to the persecutors in Acts 5:17 (p. 18). The same, common ancient motivation for hostility, however, is frequently mentioned in ancient biographers, historians, and orators.

Pervo includes copious comparisons with the apocryphal Acts, which his own publications have long used as genre analogies for Acts. Scholars have pointed out the serious weaknesses of this analogy, for example, the anachronism of evaluating Acts' genre based on later sources that probably imitate it (mostly from the late second and third centuries, the heyday of novels). More generally, Pervo's comparison with other novels suffers in that a major feature of the most typical form of ancient novel (a romance between the protagonists) does not fit Acts. Moreover, the overlap with externally attested historical details is quite atypical of novels (for some such historical details see, e.g., Charles Talbert, *Reading Luke-Acts in its Mediterranean Milieu* [Leiden: Brill, 2003] 198–201; at length, Colin Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1989] 108–58). Pervo does not muster many more convincing responses to these objections than in his earlier work. (Of course, massive works involve many years of writing; hence different stages of Pervo's thought may coexist in the same book.)

Pervo's current identification of Acts as "popular history" with a sort of novel invites comparisons with ancient "historical novels." One inclined to argue that Acts is a novel (which I am not) could make a stronger case based on this comparison than from other sorts of novels, but in antiquity such works comprised only a very small percentage of novels. (Indeed, most Gentile novels did not even involve historical characters, and those novels that did so never included the level of verifiable historical information about a recent character that we find about Paul in Acts.) Because I expected to find more extensive comparisons with historical novels in the commentary, I was disappointed, but I must comment first on his treatment of novels more generally.

Although I am convinced, with a majority of scholars, that Acts is a historical monograph, I believe that one can learn even from novels about ancient literary techniques (techniques that novelists and historians often shared). For that reason, I found Pervo's specific comparisons with novels, though far more extensive than in most commentaries, somewhat disappointing for one with his perspective. He cites, for example, the novelists Heliodorus about 50 times, Achilles Tatius 33 times, Chariton 43 times, and Xenophon of Ephesus 40 times—in about 700 pages of commentary. The literary techniques of historians come in for much lighter treatment: the massive historical work of Dionysius of Halicarnassus is cited only four times, and Diodorus Siculus seven times, Arrian three times (all the same reference), and Polybius only twice.

Pervo does cite more references than average (perhaps 2,500–3,000 extrabiblical ancient references, almost half from pagan sources and over a quarter from early Christian sources). Nevertheless, given his minority perspective on Luke's genre, I would have expected more sustained parallels with non-historical sources throughout his work and more attempts to contrast these parallels with what we find in historical works. Such comparisons are hardly pervasive in his commentary, which sometimes substitutes ridicule of Luke's assumptions about plausibility for hard comparisons with novels.

Given Pervo's suggestion that Acts is *historical* romance, it is not surprising that he cites Philostratus's *Life of Apollonius* nearly 40 times; that this work is over a century after Luke, indulges in fantasies about distant regions, and sometimes seems to echo by-then widely circulated narratives from the Gospels mitigates the value of this source to some degree, but it bears examination. What seems more astonishing is that his index lists only 13 references to Pseudo-Callisthenes's *Alexander Romance* and two references to Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, probably the most obvious other examples of the rare genre he envisions as so central (apart from Christian works imitating Luke's Acts).

To illustrate Pervo's penchant for generalizing where more hard comparisons are needed, he compares Luke's account of the African official to romances that make use of "exotic" regions, such as Heliodorus's *Aethiopica* (pp. 221–22). A survey of both novels and historical works treating "Ethiopia" (which Pervo does not provide) shows that both may include some historical elements, and historical works on the subject sometimes include some inadvertent legends. As I have argued elsewhere, however, novels speaking of Ethiopia generally include clearly mythical elements, for example, sages who could make trees salute (Philostratus, *Vit. Apoll.* 6.10). Far from evincing concern for exotic analogies, Luke does not even seek to describe Ethiopia (i.e. the kingdom of Meroë), where Philip does not travel. Indeed, in contrast to even most sources intended to be factual (e.g. Pliny the Elder), no details that Luke does include (such as the title Candace or the kingdom's implicit wealth) contradict what we securely know historically about the kingdom.

Many of Pervo's judgments, based on second-century Christian literature, make sense only on his second-century dating of Acts, though these are his most original contributions. This material, then, will be far less useful to the strong majority of readers who do not share Pervo's dating. (Pervo is well aware in his work *Dating Acts* that his

second-century date for Acts is a small minority view, though there again he interacts respectfully with those who hold other views.) This observation is not meant to denigrate Pervo's scholarship or his labor; his fresh reading of Acts in light of such sources (many of them patristic) displays tremendous erudition and required considerable labor. My point is simply that this greatest strength of the work will prove of limited value to most scholars, who remain unpersuaded by his dating of the work.

His commentary probably should replace Haenchen as the commentary of choice for a detailed, one-volume work from the more skeptical segment of Acts scholarship. Despite the many points on which other scholars will disagree (and many of us will strongly disagree) and its still greater inadequacies for pastors, scholars will need to engage this work.

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*After Jesus. Vol. 2: Paul: Missionary of Jesus.* By Paul Barnett. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008, xvi + 240 pp., \$16.00 paper.

Is the mission and message of the apostle Paul in organic continuity with the mission and message of the historical Jesus? How one answers that question is arguably the central issue of debate between critical and evangelical NT scholarship. Paul Barnett, as suggested by the title of his book, responds with a resounding affirmative. Luke's second volume, Acts, forms the historical framework into which Paul's ten pre-Pastoral Epistles coherently fit. This diachronic survey of the career of the great missionary-theologian establishes the central thesis that Paul is no innovator but faithfully adapts and applies dominical tradition to the life of the churches addressed in his epistles. The Jesus-Paul connection is most clearly set forth in chapter 7: Jesus pursued a two-stage redemptive agenda, one that began with Israel but anticipated a spiritual harvest among the Gentiles (e.g. Mark 7:27; 13:10; 14:9); being apprehended by Christ in the Damascus encounter, Paul entered into the same "calling" to proclaim the crucified Jesus "to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom 1:16b).

Great emphasis is placed on the formative impact of the Damascus Christophany (interpreted comprehensively to include Paul's subsequent baptism, conferral of the Spirit, and instruction by Ananias [Acts 9:10-19]) on Paul's core convictions, a radical reorientation of values that can only be rightly understood as both calling *and* conversion. The chronology that is followed assumes a 33 date for the crucifixion; identifies Galatians as Paul's earliest letter (ca. 47); and locates the writing of Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians during an Ephesian imprisonment (ca. 55). The survey of Paul's "Levantine Years" draws largely on the work of M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer (*Paul Between Damascus and Antioch: The Unknown Years* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1997]) with little that is original. Antioch is the natural development and broadening of Paul's commitment to the Gentile mission already commenced in the proclamation to Gentile God-fearers in the synagogues of the Levant.

Barnett is not afraid to engage various contemporary approaches to Paul and to offer fresh reconstructions of debated texts. Galatians 5:11 ("still preach circumcision") refers to Saul's pre-Damascus demand that Gentiles receive circumcision before being allowed to join the covenant community rather than an intentional mission of proselytizing Gentiles (contra T. D. Donaldson). The influx of temple priests into the church (Acts 6:7) brought Stephen and the Hellenists into conflict with Peter and the Hebraists over the full implications of the new covenant; the radical anti-temple polemic of the

former group aroused Saul's anger and moved him away from the moderating advice of Gamaliel toward his aggressive persecuting stance. Rom 7:7–24 reveals Paul's pre-Christian recognition of failure to meet the full demands of God's law (7:9–10 is the moral awareness that coincided with attaining to the status of *bar mitzvah*), though such dim sensitivity to the horrific nature of sin only reached full intensity with his new standing as a man "in Christ" (the sudden shift to the present tense in v. 14 in support of the post-conversion view of 7:14–25 is all but dismissed). 2 Corinthians 3 is the definitive passage that establishes the salvation historical shift from the Mosaic covenant to the new covenant prophesied by Jeremiah (31:31–34); the gospel is not a supra-ethnic form of "covenantal nomism" but a new order of righteousness that ends the era of condemnation signaled by the law (contra E. P. Sanders). Regardless of one's position on individual texts, one must endorse Barnett's conclusion that "Damascus was both a radical end to the old and a radical beginning to the new" (p. 133), if one is rightly to understand Paul.

Much coverage is devoted to the Jewish counter-mission (chap. 9), sponsored by the circumcision party (Acts 10:45; 11:2) of the Jerusalem church, that sought to undermine the churches birthed in the apostle's Gentile mission. The author believes the term "Judaizer" should be dropped as a descriptive term for this group, because it obscures the fact that they were Jewish Christians seeking to impose their particular understanding of the gospel on Gentiles rather than simply Jews seeking to convert Gentile believers to a form of Judaism (p. 172). However one labels them, one can question Barnett's judgments (1) that the circumcision party was the majority group in the Jerusalem church (pp. 142–43); and (2) that James, leading elder of the church, was the willing sponsor behind the visit of these "certain men from James" who sparked the "Antioch incident" that led Peter and Barnabas to act with hypocrisy toward their Gentile brothers (pp. 144–47; cf. Gal 2:11–14). The letter that follows the subsequent Jerusalem Council appears to indicate that the moderating leadership of the Jerusalem church, preeminently James, had no direct part in the unsettling work of the circumcision group in Antioch and beyond (Acts 15:23–24). Even if, as I would maintain, the counter-missionaries were a vocal minority that falsely claimed the sponsorship of the Jerusalem elders, Barnett's reconstruction of their twofold strategy of (1) visiting and directly attacking Paul's apostolic authority in Galatia, Antioch, Philippi, and Corinth (though he goes too far in maintaining that Cephas in his visit to Corinth [1 Cor 1:12; 3:22; 9:5] raised direct questions about Paul's apostleship, suggesting he was a subsidiary apostle dependent on Jerusalem for his authority [p. 170]); and (2) networking with local agitators with connections in Jerusalem to foment discord in Rome and perhaps Colossae is a plausible one.

Perhaps the most compelling portion of the book (chap. 10; given greater detail in the author's fine commentary on 2 Corinthians [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997]) is the contrast drawn between the "false apostles" or "superlative apostles" and Paul himself in 2 Corinthians 10–12. While the former appeal to their mastery of Greek oratorical skills and paranormal phenomena such as visions and miracles as their credentialing, the apostle embodies and replicates the servanthood of the crucified Christ to validate his apostleship and message (11:22–29). In this Paul shows himself "by the meekness and gentleness of Christ" (10:1) to be a faithful representative of the risen Lord.

The work is abundantly documented with primary and secondary sources, but its concise, fast-moving style leaves this reader at times wishing for further elaboration behind some of the conclusions that are drawn.

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*A Pauline Theology of Church Leadership.* By Andrew D. Clarke. Library of New Testament Studies 362. London: T & T Clark, 2008, viii + 212 pp., \$130.00.

Andrew Clarke, Senior Lecturer in New Testament at the University of Aberdeen, states that the aim of his book is “to construct a Pauline theology of leadership while reflecting on contemporary methodological and hermeneutical challenges” (p. 184). Although formal ecclesiastical structures are necessarily included in this study, the focus “is explicitly on the style, ethos, dynamics and practices of leadership, including the relationship between leader and led, and the parameters of what Paul presents as appropriate or inappropriate leadership” (p. 3).

Chapter 1, “Methodological Questions,” provides an introduction to the book including a definition of key terms such as “leadership,” “theology,” and “Pauline.” In contrast to many modern scholars, Clarke includes the entire Pauline corpus in his study. Because Paul has not left us a systematic treatment of his understanding of church leadership, Clarke finds it necessary to clarify the method of his study. He also notes that because of certain methodological and hermeneutical challenges, his research is framed as *a* Pauline theology of leadership and not *the* Pauline theology of leadership. Chapter 2, “Hermeneutical Questions,” considers current issues of interpretation that have influenced discussion and debates concerning Paul, his letters, and his view of leadership.

Chapter 3, “The Titles of Leaders,” looks at the titles “overseer,” “elders,” and “deacons” in Paul’s writings. Although Clarke focuses on these three titles, he is quick to note that a holistic approach to leadership in Paul must consider ultimately all texts that refer to the presence, function, or dysfunction of leaders and not merely the limited occurrences of certain key titles. Each of the titles is examined in the context of the house-church. Based on the internal evidence in Paul’s letters and the architectural limitations of domestic settings, Clarke concludes, “we ought to presuppose that these early Christian gatherings were normally small, and distributed over a number of domestic settings within a town” (p. 45).

Clarke is convinced that in the Pauline communities the overseer was responsible for teaching and managing the small congregation under his oversight. There is no noticeable progression or development between the writing of Philippians and the Pastoral Epistles. Each church had a plurality of overseers, but within the larger city-church there were a number of small identifiable communities, each governed by a single overseer. This overseer would have been the head of his household, and the congregation would naturally assemble in his home. The office of elder, however, is not the same as that of the overseer, although they overlap. In Clarke’s view, the elders represent honored and respected members of the community who have authority in the community as a group but do not have specific leadership responsibilities within each local congregation. Individual house-churches did not have elders; they merely functioned as a collective body when a city had multiple congregations. Here Clarke is influenced by the work of R. A. Campbell, insisting that eldership was not an individual office but more of an honored status. Clarke’s interpretation of 1 Tim 5:17 is that those among elders who ruled well and did the hard work of preaching and teaching (i.e. house-church leaders) would be given the title of overseer. All of the overseers in a city would be among the eldership, but not all the elders would be considered overseers. Although Clarke does not affirm that the terms “elder” and “overseer” are used to refer to the same office, he also does not suggest a moniscopacy in the Pastoral Epistles, such that a single overseer was head over a subordinate group of elders (contra Campbell). Finally, the term “deacon,” when referring to an office in the church, does not necessarily relate to someone who is involved in menial service, though the idea of service is naturally involved. It does, however, primarily include “the leadership of people, rather than the administration of things” (p. 70). Thus, Acts 6:1–6 does not provide the

prototype of the deacons in the early church—those whose duties consisted of the practical or administrative. Deacons worked together with the overseer in the house-church setting, but it was the overseer who had the responsibility of teaching.

In chapter 4, “The Status of Leaders,” Clarke defends the concept of a hierarchical structure of leadership in the Pauline churches. He argues that leaders, by the nature of their office, held an authoritative position. Although many scholars conclude that Paul was opposed to a hierarchical system and instead favored egalitarianism, Clarke maintains that terms such as “brother,” “co-worker,” and “fellow-soldier” should “be viewed as instances of non-hierarchical language, within a framework that accommodates leaders and led” (p. 95). Furthermore, the concept of servant leadership, which has dominated in much of the pastoral literature, does not affirm an egalitarian system of leadership but refers to leaders who operate within a hierarchy not to abuse their status but to lead with humility.

Chapter 5, “The Power of Leaders,” considers the concept of power primarily from a sociological point of view. Clarke discusses types of power and measuring power (e.g. power and its effects, power as a disposition, power as a resource, and power as an exchange). He concludes that “for Paul, while leadership entails the exercising of power, the task of leadership is not about power” (p. 130). In chapter 6, “The Task of Leaders,” Clarke explores the duty of leaders primarily through the metaphors of the body (leaders are to build up the body and to encourage mutual upbuilding) and the household (leaders are to manage/lead their household—authority exercised in love). The task of leadership also involves teaching, which is dominant in Paul’s letters. Chapter 7, “The Tools of Leaders,” discusses the two tools that Paul used in his own ministry—persuasion (rhetoric) and his character or lifestyle (personal example). Clarke notes that although Paul was against the use of rhetoric—when defined as selfish manipulation—in the proclamation of the gospel, this does not mean that Paul lacked accomplishment as a public speaker (see Luke’s portrayal of Paul in Acts). Even in his own writings, Paul frequently appealed to the mind and emotions of his correspondents. Finally, Paul also used his own life as an example by calling others to imitate him. In doing this, Paul was not privileging his own position but was concerned about the spread of the gospel.

This work makes a positive contribution in the area of Pauline ecclesiology. Clarke presents a nuanced work that takes into consideration much of the literature written from a critical perspective on Paul and his churches. He also bases his views upon a historical reconstruction that takes into account the relevant data from Paul’s letters as well as current information gained by historical and sociological studies. He is open to Pauline authorship of the Pastoral Epistles, though, in the end, he is non-committal. Clarke is also correct in affirming a hierarchical (though still simple) view of the early church. He rightly opposes those who insist that the earlier Pauline church had no formal leadership but was led by the free promptings of the Spirit.

Although there is great value in much that is written in this book, I was disappointed at times. I felt there was an inconsistency in the approach of the various chapters. In my opinion chapter 2, “Hermeneutical Questions,” was unnecessary. Other chapters, such as chapter 5, “The Power of Leaders,” were focused more on sociology than theology. In chapters 6 and 7 there was too much attention given to Paul and his own leadership as opposed to what Paul taught about those who were leaders in the local congregations. I also remain unconvinced by some of the specifics in the book. For example, I am not persuaded that the titles “overseer” and “elder” represent different offices. If elders were merely honored, wealthy, older men in the community, why does Paul command Titus to “appoint elders in every city” (Titus 1:5; cf. Acts 14:23)? Furthermore, if elders (who are not also overseers) do not have leadership in the individual house-churches, precisely what is the role of elders? Clarke notes that as a collective body they “give wise counsel” (p. 56). Yet such a description is too vague and

contrary to texts such as 1 Tim 5:17 where Paul states that elders rule and have the duty of preaching and teaching. To claim that those elders who rule and teach or preach are also given the title of overseer raises another question: why did Paul not simply use the term overseer (“Overseers who rule well are worthy of double honor”)? It was also noticeable that Clarke failed to consult scholarly works written by Americans and/or evangelicals. Finally, at \$130 this book is overpriced and limits the readership considerably. This is a book about church leadership that will never be read by many church leaders.

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*Galatians*. By Gordon D. Fee. Pentecostal Commentary Series. Dorset: Deo Publishing, 2007, ix + 262 pp., \$34.95 paper.

Gordon Fee’s commentary on Paul’s letter to the Galatians is the third volume in the Pentecostal Commentary Series. According to Fee’s preface, this series is written by Pentecostals, primarily for Pentecostals, specifically, Pentecostal pastors. As Fee points out, when he finished his Ph.D. in 1966, he was only the second Pentecostal to complete such a task. While many others from this tradition subsequently have followed his path, Fee remains one of the leading, if not *the* leading Pentecostal NT scholar. Therefore, he is uniquely qualified for the task of writing this commentary. However, Fee is also quick to point out that, since he is committed to the text above his own tradition, his aim is to approach Galatians “on its own terms” (p. viii).

Fee’s introduction to the book establishes more clearly his method and approach to the commentary. In his discussion of some of the standard issues in the study of Galatians, Fee’s method is refreshingly straightforward. He argues that many of the scholarly discussions regarding the audience and date of Galatians are unduly influenced by the Acts narrative. However, since neither Galatians nor Acts provide a complete picture of the events in Paul’s life and their causes, Fee is content to rely on the data in Galatians to answer these questions. Therefore, although he slightly favors the southern Galatia hypothesis, Fee argues that we cannot determine from the letter itself precisely who the Galatians were and whether they lived in the northern or southern part of Asia Minor. Therefore, the audience question is, in some sense, irresolvable. He also favors using almost exclusively internal evidence to date the letter. Fee dates Galatians in the mid-50s because of its stylistic similarity to Romans and the Corinthian letters. Neither the audience nor the date, however, is determinative for interpreting the letter, argues Fee. Rather, the more important issues are the purpose of the letter and the nature of Paul’s opponents, since these can be determined more clearly, if not precisely, from the letter itself. In short, Fee argues that the “agitators” claimed that Torah-observance was necessary to “complete” the gift of the Spirit (p. 5).

In the commentary proper, Fee devotes most of the space to his exegesis and comments on the text itself, rarely straying too far afield. He generally rejects the “rhetorical approach” to the text favored by Hans Dieter Betz and others, noting that Paul was writing a letter, not an oratory piece. Furthermore, he notes that those who favor the rhetorical approach rarely agree about how the sections of the letter correspond to standard rhetorical categories.

In his exegetical footnotes, Fee rarely interacts substantively with other works and mostly focuses on clarifying his argument and interacting with text and translation issues. This is not to say, however, that he avoids controversy altogether, since, when

necessary, Fee summarizes important scholarly discussions and provides his own perspective on the issue at hand. For example, while avoiding becoming bogged down in justification and the New Perspective on Paul, Fee summarizes the major options for the meanings of "justify," "works of the law," and "faith of Christ" in about six and a half pages. He also frequently points to other works that discuss controversial issues beyond the scope of this commentary.

After each section of the text as he has divided it, Fee includes his "reflection and response." Although the exegetical sections will certainly be of great benefit to his readers, Fee's pastoral reflections may be the most helpful part of the commentary for the intended audience of Pentecostal pastors. In these sections, Fee often reflects both on instances where his tradition has succeeded in properly applying Paul's injunctions in Galatians and where it has failed to do the same. While I do not come from a Pentecostal tradition, many of Fee's comments were helpful and sobering to me. My guess is that they may be doubly so for those within the tradition. Regardless, Fee's reflections on the text represent years of careful and mature thinking about Galatians and will benefit anyone who is serious about understanding and applying the letter.

A review of this length is obviously not the place to enter into serious debate on either the method or exegesis in this commentary. However, there were a few places where Fee's argument in this book seemed to be somewhat lacking. First, while Fee's insistence on discussing the recipients of the letter in light of the evidence in Galatians itself is indeed refreshing, his similar rationale for dating the book late is less convincing. Betz and others have demonstrated that one need not commit to the southern Galatia hypothesis in order to argue for an early date of composition (see Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians: A Commentary on Paul's Letter to the Churches in Galatia* [Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979] 5, 12). While Fee mentions that Paul's famine relief visit to Jerusalem described in Acts 11 can be reconciled with an early date for Galatians, he seems to ignore its relevance for his later dating of the book. While it is one thing to deal primarily with the evidence of Galatians itself, it is quite another to overlook other relevant evidence. However, as Fee points out, the audience and dating of the book are somewhat irrelevant to the interpretation of Galatians itself. These phenomena are much more relevant when attempting to establish a chronology of Paul's life.

Another place that raised a question in my mind was Fee's discussion of Gal 3:28. As I mentioned above, this review is no place to enter into substantial discussion of Fee's detailed exegesis. However, given Fee's well-known position as a theological egalitarian, coupled with the importance of this verse for some egalitarian arguments, it was surprising that only half of a paragraph was devoted to the role of women in Fee's discussion of Gal 3:28. For pastors who may be seriously wrestling with this issue, this seems to be an insufficient amount of discussion. However, as Fee points out, the egalitarian position is often the default position in the Pentecostal tradition; therefore, given the intended audience of this volume, he was perhaps justified in his minimal discussion of this issue.

Apart from the questions raised above, which may be excusable given the intended audience and aims of this commentary, and perhaps a few other minor exegetical points, I found this commentary just what one would expect from a mature and thoughtful scholar such as Gordon Fee. As he states in his preface, this work is essentially the product of his many years of teaching Galatians. Fee's masterful summaries of complex issues and clear explanations of his favored positions are obviously the fruit of his years of labor in the book. While this commentary may be of most benefit to the Pentecostal pastor, students of the Bible from all traditions will richly benefit from Fee's clear explanations and thoughtful reflections on Paul's letter to the Galatians.

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*The Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles: An Introduction.* By Hans-Josef Klauck. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008, xxiv + 288 pp., \$39.95 paper.

In recent generations there has been an impressive surge of interest in apocryphal literature amongst biblical scholars. Spurred by the discoveries at Nag Hammadi in the middle of the twentieth century, scholars continue to be fascinated with alternate versions of the history of early Christianity. In particular, this scholarly attention has been devoted primarily to apocryphal Gospels dealing with the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth—as most aptly seen in the recent discovery of and publications related to the *Gospel of Judas*. However, largely overlooked in the midst of this renewed foray into non-canonical literature are the various apocryphal Acts that catalogue the legendary deeds and travels of the apostles after the time of Jesus. Thankfully, this current introductory volume by Hans-Josef Klauck serves to remedy (at least partially) the lack of attention paid to this important area of study. Indeed, Klauck himself notes that it has been over 100 years since Lipsius published his four-volume introduction to the apocryphal Acts of the apostles between 1883 and 1890. For this reason alone, this current volume by Klauck—which is actually a slightly updated English version of his German volume, *Apokryphe Apostelakten: Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 2005)—should be welcomed by those scholars interested in apocryphal literature.

Klauck's introduction devotes a chapter to each of the following apocryphal Acts: *The Acts of John*, *The Acts of Paul*, *The Acts of Peter*, *The Acts of Andrew*, *The Acts of Thomas*, *The Acts of Peter and the Twelve Apostles*, and *The Pseudo-Clementines*. In addition, he devotes a chapter to what he calls "Later Acts of the Apostles," which includes lesser-known works like *The Acts of Philip*, *The Acts of Matthew*, *The Acts of Matthias*, *The Acts of Barnabas*, and a number of others. The overall literary landscape surveyed by Klauck reminds the reader just how vast and how popular the apocryphal Acts were amongst some early Christian groups (particularly in the third century and later).

Each of these chapters on individual Acts is generally broken down into the same three sections (and occasionally a fourth). The first section is "Context." Here, Klauck provides helpful background information regarding a variety of issues such as (1) the manuscripts at our disposal for that particular Acts; (2) early testimony to the Acts by the early Church Fathers; (3) the structure and unity of the work; and (4) the date and provenance of its original publication. Klauck offers concise but critical data in these sections and thereby provides a helpful historical context for further study of each apocryphal Acts. In addition, his assessment of the historical context is, on the whole, quite fair and balanced and avoids some of the more radical conclusions by some scholars who wish to push the origins of some of the apocryphal Acts into the first century. For example, when it comes to the *Pseudo-Clementines* (or at least portions thereof), the Tübingen school has consistently pushed for a first or second-century date, while Klauck is content with a more cautious third or fourth-century date.

Section 2 of each chapter is "Contents." This portion is the lengthiest and also one of the most helpful for Klauck's volume. Rather than offering a new translation of each of the apocryphal Acts or even an extended selection of excerpts, Klauck instead provides a detailed summary of each of the major sections of that particular work. These summaries are useful for gaining a quick sense of the storyline without needing to read the entire document (some of which are quite lengthy). For those who are unfamiliar with the general content of the apocryphal Acts, these sections will be invaluable.

Section 3 of each chapter is "Evaluation." In these sections, Klauck dives deeper into the theological distinctives of each work and assesses what those distinctives tell us about the background and provenance of the writing. Again, his assessment is balanced, and he does not shy away from acknowledging the rather bizarre and eccentric aspects

of these apocryphal writings. Some of the Acts are decidedly Gnostic, such as the passion narrative in *The Acts of John*, which contains unmistakable docetic elements. Many of these apocryphal Acts show a tendency toward asceticism, celibacy, and the renunciation of marriage (most substantially seen in *The Acts of Philip*). Of course, also central to almost all of these Acts is a focus on the miracles and deeds of the apostles, which often bear obvious legendary elements. For example, at one point in *The Acts of Paul* a lion approaches Paul and asks to be baptized, and at another point in the story Paul is beheaded and milk pours forth instead of blood.

One of the central strengths of this volume is the extensive and updated bibliographies that it includes. However, instead of including the bibliography for each work at the end of the chapter (as one might expect), he takes a different (and I think better) approach by spreading the bibliographical data throughout the chapter depending on the topic being discussed. So, for example, when he engages in background discussion he begins with the bibliography related to background, and when he discusses the various sections of the Acts he includes bibliographical references relevant for that section, and so on. For any scholar interested in further research in the apocryphal Acts this may prove to be the most valuable feature of the book.

My only complaint (and a minor one at that) is that I wish the author had engaged more with the question of how these apocryphal Acts relate to (and differ from) the canonical Acts. He does offer snippets of this from time to time but leaves the reader wanting more. Of course, in his defense, this is only intended to be an introductory volume, and no doubt space precluded a more thorough treatment of that question. In the end, Klauck's volume is a fine introduction that lays a solid foundation for further research into the apocryphal Acts. Yet, more than that, it may also be a preliminary step in correcting the myopic focus on apocryphal Gospels and may generate some increased scholarly attention to the oft-overlooked genre of the Acts.

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*Has God Said? Scripture, The Word of God, and the Crisis of Theological Authority.* The Evangelical Theological Society Monograph Series. By John D. Morrison. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2006, 306 pp., \$30.00 paper.

John Morrison, Professor of Theology and Philosophy at Liberty University and Liberty Theological Seminary, researches the question of how the Word of God relates to the words of Scripture. His purpose is to explain the destructive causes that led to Scripture being separated from God's revelation and to construct a means by which Scripture should be identified with God's Word. Morrison outlines the history of arguments and positions that have brought about the division and the various theologians who have attempted to bring a resolution to overcome the divide. He concludes with his own proposal on how to unite the Word with words by constructing proposals from the Church Fathers, Calvin, and Einstein.

The first two chapters provide the historical background concerning why Scripture began to be challenged and considered distinct from God's revelation under what Morrison calls "pious camouflage." In chapter one he surveys the ideas of Spinoza, Semler, and Gabler to show that their beliefs were driven by modern presuppositions that were already opposed to divine revelation. In chapter two Morrison argues that the culmination of dividing the Word of God from Scripture came with Kant's Copernican Revolution, which was based upon Newton's scientific theories. The history of theolo-

gians who responded to Kant's divide between the *noumena* and *phenomena* included Schleiermacher, Bultmann, Tillich, Work, and Vanhoozer. The questions these theologians faced include: if and how God makes himself known; how religion can be intelligible if God cannot be known; and how Scripture can be the Word of God if Christ is the true Word of God. Morrison presents each theologian's beliefs and presuppositions fairly with a brief critique so that the consequences of their ideas are obvious. Vanhoozer's adaption of speech act theory and emphasis upon a Triune doctrine of revelation is proposed as the strongest option.

In chapter three Morrison responds to how biblical criticism has been appropriated by evangelicals. This chapter interacts with papers presented by Grudem and Silva at the Evangelical Theological Society. The point of these papers was that evangelicals are adopting a methodology that is in conflict with their most basic beliefs. Morrison surveys the historical-critical method and its various fields, concluding by agreeing with Grudem and Silva that the method is contrary and opposed to the Christian doctrine of God. He adds that many scholars who adopt critical methods can have psychological effects so that the principles upon which these methods are based upon can lead one to doubting the authority of Scripture.

In the fourth chapter Morrison interacts with the post-Vatican II Roman Catholic response to the divide between God's Word and Scripture. This reaction parallels the responses found among Protestants (discussed in ch. 2). Morrison provides helpful summaries of leading Catholic theologians such as Rahner, Swinburne, Dulles, and Brown. These contemporary Catholic theologians moved beyond dual authorship and began adopting progressive methodologies that emphasize the horizontal nature of Scripture as a human and culturally bounded text.

In chapters five and six Morrison continues the history of the Protestant divide discussed in the first two chapters and presents what may be the most significant contribution for evangelicals. Chapter five gives a history of "Barthian" theories of God's Word and chapter six differentiates these theories from Barth's own view of Scripture. The "Barthians" have misunderstood Barth's ontology; therefore, they have appropriated or responded to his doctrine of revelation in ways foreign to Barth. According to Morrison, Barth's ontology of "being in becoming" as applied to Scripture means the words of Scripture cannot become the Word of God unless they are, somehow, already the Word of God. The words become the Word of God because they are the Word of God. This position makes Barth friendlier to evangelicals and tries to make more sense of Barth being an exegetical theologian by explaining the ontology that lies behind his practice. It is difficult to imagine that so many theologians close to Barth would have misunderstood him concerning his doctrine of revelation. For example, Torrance read Barth as a "Barthian" and was never corrected by Barth and was chosen to be the one who would continue his *Church Dogmatics* if Barth were unable to finish them. Morrison provides a helpful survey of scholars who have responded both positively and negatively to Barth in attempts to give Scripture authority while recognizing the humanity of the text (following Barth's emphasis in both). A weakness of the book is Morrison's failure to include Stanley Grenz in the survey of influential "Barthians." Grenz's doctrine of revelation and Scripture has become, arguably, more influential than the other authors mentioned and has enough nuances that it requires significant discussion and analysis.

In chapter seven and in the appendix, Morrison prescribes how Scripture can be identified as the Word of God in light of Einstein's corrections to Newtonian physics and Calvin's doctrine of revelation. Morrison argues for an identity theory: the Word of God is identified as the words of Scripture. The problem established in earlier chapters was that scientific and philosophical ideas caused a necessary denial of this identity. Morrison proposes that evangelicals should look to the new understanding of a four-dimensional world proposed by Einstein. This framework provides evangelicals with

a critical realism that is humble in terms of not seeking an objective standpoint (like having a God's-eye-view of reality) and that gives appropriate place to one's culture and subjectivity influencing one's knowledge. Objectivity is allowed because the object itself makes itself known in its own way, and human beings have been created to know it. Torrance builds on Einstein's relational model so that God personally reveals himself as he pleases, but Torrance's theory fails because he denies God revealing himself objectively with words in our world; his understanding of God and his revelation is too transcendentalized. Morrison finds the proper solution in a "Christocentric, multi-leveled, interactive" model that will properly unite the relationship between God's Word and Scripture. Christ is established as the fullest revelation so that the Word of God made flesh, and Scripture is understood as a "species" of revelation when considered in the larger work of God's revelation. There are higher levels of revelation and knowledge of God (i.e. the Word made flesh is higher than the inspired Word), but there is no divide in the authority of each because both are historical works of God that can be known by human beings in their own proper way. The triune nature of God plays a significant role in this model because the Spirit's work in the economy of God is what establishes the words of Scripture as authoritative revelation and continues to do so as a servant under the revelation of Christ the Son.

In the appendix Morrison sets forth how Scripture and tradition, specifically the rule of faith, are understood together among the Apostolic Fathers, the Reformers, and contemporary theologians. He convincingly proves that the early Fathers and Reformers had a healthy respect and role for the creeds and rule of faith so that *sola scriptura* does not necessarily deny dependence upon tradition. Morrison lays out helpful parameters from the Fathers and Reformers for how evangelicals today can appropriate tradition in their theology without abandoning *sola scriptura*.

The strengths of *Has God Said?* and its contributions to the contemporary landscape concerning Scripture make it a helpful resource for evangelicals. Morrison is able to give an overarching view of how the problem of identifying Scripture with God's revelation began while providing evangelicals with the concepts necessary to overcome the problem. A unique contribution of *Has God Said?* in relation to other works on divine revelation is the scientific background that led early scholars to question the Bible and the introduction of the new science, via Torrance, that will provide the new categories necessary for reestablishing Scripture as God's Word. Morrison presents other authors fairly and shows their particular contributions to the problem. He then explains how objectivity can once again be gained by adopting critical realism and reconsidering the doctrine of revelation of theologians preceding modernity. A strong argument for Scripture being identified with God's Word without detracting from Christ being the Word in the fullest sense moves theologians beyond the false dichotomy that has become a popular argument against Scripture. The work is obviously written for evangelicals and addresses the various problems that readers of this *Journal* continue to face.

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*The Erosion of Inerrancy in Evangelicalism: Responding to New Challenges to Biblical Authority.* By G. K. Beale. Wheaton: Crossway, 2008, 300 pp., \$20.00 paper.

Well known for detailed analyses and critical scrutiny of his interlocutors, Gregory Beale, Professor of New Testament at Wheaton College, has offered the latest contribution to the inerrancy debate. As the first significant defense of inerrancy in the last

twenty years, its stated aim is “to focus on a specific debate that bears upon the broad issue of biblical authority that has arisen recently in evangelicalism” (p. 21). Accordingly, the majority of its proper content is taken up in exacting dialogue with Peter Enns (chaps. 1–4). This discussion is followed by a defense of the traditional view of Isaiah’s authorship (chap. 5) and a section assimilating a theological understanding of the biblical cosmos with biblical authority (chaps. 6–7). Afterthoughts appear in three appendices dealing with (1) hermeneutics and epistemology, (2) the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy, and (3) sixteen quotations from Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*, alluding to his commitment to an errant and fallible Bible.

After locating himself within the last thirty years of the U.S. evangelical context, Beale raises concern about revisions of “the standard North American evangelical statement on Scripture.” He identifies the general cause of the revisions to be (1) post-modernism and (2) the fact that conservative students are earning doctorates in non-evangelical schools (p. 20). The contemporary face of the “new challenges” to inerrancy (p. 21), elsewhere defined as “a new version of an older view known as the infallibility of the Bible” (p. 220), is offered by Enns, whom Beale deems “too influenced by the extremes of postmodern thought” (p. 44). Beale elsewhere identifies Enns with von Rad (p. 43) and the Rogers and McKim proposal (p. 46), which lapses the debate back into its previous wave in the late 1970s and early 80s.

The first two chapters assess recent developments in OT studies. The Scripture principle espoused in J. I. Packer’s *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* is representative of Beale’s position (p., 21, *passim*). He thus takes direct issue with the view of non-historicity and “myth” in the OT, and also with “legend,” which Beale deems to be Enns’s answer to evidences wrought by historical-criticism (p. 38). The book sees attempts to neatly separate “cognitive information” (e.g. historical or scientific facts) from “morality and salvific issues” as deeply flawed, as is the “incarnational model” (p. 40).

Beale indicts Enns’s *Inspiration and Incarnation* (2005) for seeing difficulties from biblical data as too problematic while not adequately representing alternative evangelical interpretations. According to Beale, this prompts believers to lose confidence in the Bible. He shows how Enns too quickly distinguishes theological from historical truth while paying little hermeneutical regard to “conscious historical genre signals by biblical writers” (pp. 66–67). Heavy dependence on ANE extra-biblical sources is also shown to be faulty because some of their genres, which themselves are difficult to define, may have no relevance to the Bible at all (pp. 72–73). Yet Enns is said to want ANE literature to play a dominant role for understanding history, attempting to interpret texts in their literary and historical contexts while not plunging into immediate harmonizing, as some inerrantists have been prone to do. Beale commends him for this; still, Beale finds the category of “myth” the “least probable” in cases like Genesis. Thus, Enns’s interpretive starting point is questionable (pp. 78–79).

Chapters three and four interact with Enns’s view of the use of the OT in the NT, posing challenges and identifying weaknesses and implications for the view that NT writers quoted mythical accounts while being convinced that the accounts were historically true. Contra Enns, Beale suggests that NT writers, though not necessarily doing historical-grammatical exegesis, were “engaging the Old Testament in an effort to remain consistent with the original context and intention of the Old Testament author” (p. 87). A major weakness Beale points out is that Enns avoids other scholarly options by polarizing the historical-grammatical method from the *christotelic* one, leaving no other alternatives (p. 104). Yet Beale notes that Enns admits that a “proper method” still may not bring exegetical clarity on every point (p. 111).

Beale further notes Enns’s selectivity in responding to criticism, neglecting the major issue of “myth” in 1 Cor 10:4 (p. 118), which yields ground for Beale to challenge

what he thinks are Enns's underlying assumptions. Some of Beale's accusations of Enns do not seem to be on target. For example, Beale accuses Enns of deeming it "inappropriately modernist" to think that Jesus and the apostles "could have had understandings of the Old Testament that had significant links to the Old Testament's original meaning" (p. 121, quote is Beale's). Enns simply never said this.

Chapter five gives scriptural evidence for Isaiah's integrity, the problem having first been mentioned in the introduction. Arguments for the single-author view are made and supported by R. Shultz and E. J. Young. These arguments include the NT's view of Isaiah, along with Isaiah's historic and prophetic nature. Here is where the inerrancy debate's bearing on the Bible's authority is brought out (p. 123). Beale lends substantial weight to Isaianic authorship for Isaiah and posits that the evidence reveals "repeated references to the active, personal role of Isaiah in writing and prophesying in all parts of the book" (p. 128). After this, Beale contrasts a critical reading of Isaiah in order to dismiss any Barthian views of Scripture. He also demonstrates the authority of biblical passages, whose texts give testimony to precision and accuracy (e.g. Matt. 15:7; "*rightly* did Isaiah prophecy of you . . ."). A strong case is made here for the infallibility and inerrancy of prophetic texts, with time transcendent vocative application of prophecy, displaying that authorial authority is bound up in the message (p. 135). After making reference to Matthew 24:35, along with the time and culturally-transcendent nature of God's word, Beale concludes, "The truth of Christ's words and teachings are not culturally bound but transcend all cultures and remain unaltered by cultural beliefs and traditions that contain untrue elements" (p. 144).

Chapters six and seven present unique material synthesizing biblical cosmology with scientific cosmology, showing how the celestial and temple archetypes are reflected in phenomenological descriptions of the natural creation (p. 163). Beale makes acute correlation between the heavenly embodiment/temple/tabernacle and the cosmic embodiment/temple/tabernacle that will likewise be displayed in the future "new" embodiment of the cosmos, the future heavenly temple/tabernacle. While self-critically thinking that not "every part" of his analysis of the "astronomical significance" will be persuasive, and later noting the difficulty of presenting this systematic depiction because "only snapshots" are scattered throughout Scripture (p. 204), Beale nevertheless deems it corporately sufficient to symbolize the heavens as God's "big cosmic tabernacle." Following Jewish commentators, he argues against a late-developed cosmic-temple understanding and gives reasons why pagan nations had similar temple structures, mimicking God's natural temple, which is the cosmos (pp. 174–75). ANE concepts of foreign gods and temples also symbolized cosmological accounts of the world (pp. 175–176), though Israel's was the "true temple" and pagan temples had no account of the eschatological significance that Israel's story did (p. 183). For Beale, "the cumulative effect," while not all similarities drawn are admittedly as strong as others, is that Eden is indicated as "the first archetypal earthly temple," situated in "garden-like form" upon which all of Israel's temples were based (p. 191).

Chapter seven moves back to the issue of the authority of Scripture. OT cosmic descriptions are all said to be "charged with a temple theology to one degree or another," arguing against the idea of OT writers thinking in terms of the "mythical conventions" of their day. These descriptions are said to be "not scientific but theological, understanding the cosmos as a big temple," which Beale argues is "such a theological point" that upholds inerrancy and can be readily accepted by Christians of the twenty-first century (pp. 194–96). As he understands it, "everything [in Scripture] is charged with theological significance" (p. 205), and much cosmological language should not be deemed as "scientific description," because intentions are often to describe "a temple" that can still today be called "an accurate theological description" (p. 209). Beale goes so far to suggest that it is an issue of biblical authority to believe the cosmos is a temple

(p. 214), though the case should probably be made more softly in light of his earlier acknowledgement of the difficulty of its systematic presentation (p. 204). This temple theology and cosmology, nevertheless, give ground for “some figurative and even literal phenomenological descriptions that are easily understood and even shared by modern readers” (p. 214) and provide further options for interpreting the relationship of OT from other ANE conceptions of creation, history, and temples (p. 216). Accordingly, there is no reason to think that the biblical writers were locked into unconsciously imbibing their mythical acculturation. If so, as Beale has argued, they would have been employing a modernist-notion of thinking in compartmentalized ways, according to both their culture and their theology, which seems likely to be an “artificial imposition onto the biblical writers” (p. 217). If this is the case, however, the ancients would seem to have had a theologically developed view of Scripture in light of ancient pagan traditions similar to the one today that contrasts inerrancy in light of opposing views wrought by today’s acculturations.

The first appendix is a revised 1999 article dealing with epistemological and hermeneutical matters in a critique of Steve Moyise’s “soft postmodernism” (p. 224), followed by a brief reflective addendum on how globalism relates to postmodernism (pp. 261–65). Moyise asserts that modern readers “create meaning” from biblical texts instead of recognizing meaning “already inherent in the text” (p. 229). While not willing to say that interpretation is void of creativity (p. 245), he is also unwilling to confuse the author’s original meaning with extension or application of that meaning (p. 239). Admittedly, the issue may be an epistemological disagreement over authority and inspiration (pp. 250, 252). For Beale, the issue is a “Christian worldview” that bases its knowledge on God’s revelation, whose “enduring foundation” for the “absolute transcendent determinant meaning to all texts” is something presupposed on the basis of “an omniscient, sovereign, and transcendent God.” This God “knows the exhaustive yet determinant and true meaning of all texts because he stands above the world he has constructed and above all the social constructs his creatures have constructed,” yet because he created them to share partly in his attributes, they have “some determinant meaning of the communicative acts of others” (p. 257). According to Beale, if one cannot know what God communicated in his inspired Scripture, then the Bible “has no binding relation to us.” He therefore sees “an authoritative word of God” as no good at all if one cannot know “what that word has said.” Herein Beale finds “the ultimate danger of postmodern perspectives on interpreting the Bible” (p. 259).

The second appendix gives the basis from which Beale has sought to operate throughout the book—the Chicago Statement with its affirmation, denials, and exposition (pp. 267–79). The final appendix gives place for Barth’s view of Scripture (pp. 281–83), which is getting a “revival of interest” (p. 20) and whose influence Beale sees as highly problematic for evangelicals today. By citing Barth at relevant points, and having taken him to task elsewhere in the book, Beale hopes to clarify the Barthian position on Scripture so evangelicals can acutely observe his views and perhaps understand where one influence on the current state for an evangelical view of Scripture has come from.

While the strengths of Beale’s book are many and readily seen, criticisms are notwithstanding. Though beginning strong, it does not deliver conclusively for many reasons. Unfortunately, the “rhetorical tone” of the debate is still a bit rough. Is it really always helpful to point out opponents’ inaccuracies and ambiguities? And whereas the “unclear” label is reserved for Enns and Moyise (pp. 27, 229), I found Beale’s work very confusing at times, especially when dealing with rejoinder, surrejoinder, additional surrejoinders, first and third-person passive depictions, and even another author in the conversation, which seemed unnecessary. While one cannot fault attempts at objectivity, a research assistant hardly offers unbiased clarification in a debate, and here

seemed only to add to the convolution. Unfortunately, mutual understanding seems limited between Beale and Enns (pp. 61, 63, 67, 112), even though purported clarifications abound and, though shielded by occasional disclaimers (p. 55), so does the rhetoric. In a debate so historically explosive, with undergraduates, pastors, and academics eager to take sides, clarity and charity are essential.

When Beale interacted with Enns's view of "myth," he never defined the term (pp. 27–38). One also wonders whether Walton is a truly reliable guide for Beale's purposes, unwilling himself to state whether or not the Genesis cosmology or Adam was essentially historical (cf. John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006], 209). Beale also makes the bold claim that "the majority" of conservative scholars hold to a completely objective, unbiased view of recording history. While purporting a consensus fallacy is never a good idea, Beale provides no footnote or references for this assertion (p. 38).

As Beale notes, Enns often offers simplistic and weak arguments, occasionally creating false dichotomies like the limited options of the *christotelic* versus the historical-grammatical hermeneutic, or the historical reading versus the mythical reading, with no alternatives. Yet Beale does not grant merits to Enns's arguments at points and occasionally pigeonholes him (pp. 66–67). Enns's response to the accusation of being a postmodernist is also never acknowledged (cf. *JETS* 49/2: 317, n. 10), though his stance as a supposed postmodernist characterizes the tone of the book. And this occurs even though Beale himself borrows from an acknowledged postmodern "critical realism" (p. 48). Underlying assumptions are also read into Enns (p. 121, *passim*). Nevertheless, Beale's own ability to read into things cannot be mistaken. For example, when the "temple" agenda appears (chaps. 6 and 7), one wonders if any other objective reading of Scripture is even possible. This situation could even be potentially harmful to Beale's entire case. The book also includes no serious engagement of postmodern thought occurring with any leading postmodern thinker(s). Instead, Beale seems to be interacting with convoluted challenges to the standard doctrine of inerrancy mainly brought about by evangelicals. He thus deals with what he understands postmodernism and its influence to be.

One may also wonder how the phenomenological designation of cosmic descriptions set forth by Beale relates to the historical or scientifically accurate descriptions, or as-it-happened time-historically located events that correspond with reality. In other words, in light of Beale's approach to the OT, were the events really essential history and did they happen in the manner the Bible says they happened? Or might his position be guilty of a negative proof fallacy where one never finds errors because even observable ones can be explained as "phenomenological" or "cosmologically" theological? For example, does "temple" carry anything more than "theological significance" throughout? It would be no surprise if at this point Beale himself may be inadvertently treading down a mild postmodern path of sorts.

Furthermore, it does not seem that any Barthians or evangelicals considering a Barthian view of Scripture will be persuaded by Beale. Barthians know that there is more to Barth than what he states in any one or many places. Barth's thought in *Church Dogmatics* is said to be "one cohesive argument, and no single stage within the argument is definitive for the whole" (John Webster, *Karl Barth* [London: Continuum, 2004, 50]). As with Barth, Beale also seems to misunderstand the Chicago Statement. He criticizes evangelicals who consider themselves "reformers of an antiquated evangelicalism, represented, for example, by the Chicago Statement on Inerrancy" (p. 21). Yet in stating this Beale fails to recognize the very nature of the Chicago Statement, including Packer's comments about its shelf-life (J. I. Packer, *Beyond the Battle for the Bible* [Westchester, IL: Cornerstone, 1980] 48) and its own self-invitation for modification and extension (cf. the Preface to the Chicago Statement in the book under review,

pp. 268–69), though Beale himself offers some modification, albeit in a very minor way (p. 267, n. 1)

There are a few minor typographical issues (e.g. “realties” should be “realities” [p. 184] and the dated usage of BADG is questionable [p. 118; cf. with BDAG on p. 135, n. 12]). Beyond this, jumbled argumentation seems to tie the book together, with Beale in the defensive posture for his somewhat disjointed program. This may be the result of the book consisting of six articles that appear in other publications. It must be noted though that this work did not set out to be a complete defense of a doctrine of inerrancy or a comprehensive constructive Scripture principle in light of the recent resurgent argumentation against inerrancy, although Beale is certainly capable of one. Evangelical Christians will have to look elsewhere for this, which seems not too far down the road in the present context.

Whether one agrees with Beale on his point of temple cosmology or on his method, one must admit that his thought constructively builds on a theological commitment to the Bible’s inerrant authority, though his exegetical method and its other theological variegations may be sketchy and subjectively indeterminate. Beale seriously engages the exegetical and theological task given to evangelicals from an inerrantist framework. He has engaged arguments head-on and ANE literature with his presuppositions about inspiration and with his stated interpretive program. He accomplished exactly what Enns should do/have done in order to subject his ideas to the biblical evidence. For this Beale is to be highly commended. Other biblical scholars and theologians would be well served in learning from Beale’s approach of subjecting new ideas to the Bible’s authority. Moreover, he has provided a helpful installment in the inerrancy debate, seeking to engage detractors adequately, defend satisfactorily and advance constructively the inerrancy position. Those who will most benefit from this book will be individuals who have been impressed by recent arguments from inerrancy’s critics. Beale has given them a new way for holding to inerrancy while simultaneously engaging serious biblical theology.

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*The Theology of John Calvin.* By Charles Partee. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008, xix + 345 pp., \$49.95.

Over the last four decades, Charles Partee has established himself as a preeminent interpreter of John Calvin, authoring numerous articles on the Genevan Reformer and the book *Calvin and Classical Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 1977; repr. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005). Yet Partee’s most recent and ambitious undertaking may also prove to be his most significant contribution to Calvin scholarship. In it the P. C. Rossin Professor of Church History at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary focuses his long career of studying and teaching Calvin upon the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* with a twofold objective of (1) surveying the “full sweep” of Calvin’s theology; and (2) collecting the intellectual and spiritual benefits that accrue (p. xi). This objective is underpinned by Partee’s belief that just as Calvin’s theology has permanent importance as a field of historical inquiry, so too is it presently important as a resource for Christian understanding and faith, because “we study great teachers of the past in large measure for what we can learn from them that is useful to us today” (p. xiii).

Students from all schools of Calvin interpretation should take keen interest in the prolegomena of *The Theology of John Calvin*. To begin with, the scope of this study has been determined by three basic convictions, noteworthy because they establish Partee’s

terms of engagement with Calvin, and in turn, challenge some constitutional features of the alleged strictly historical and contextual approach to Calvin scholarship, an approach forcefully championed by the immensely learned and pugnacious Richard Muller.

The first of Partee's convictions is that Calvin's theology, in itself, is "a complete and sufficient subject" (p. 3). Partee happily grants the legitimacy and potential profit of studying Calvin within the context of his predecessors and contemporaries, but he does not grant that this is the only valid, or in all cases the superior, approach to Calvin. For even if an "unaccommodated" understanding of any human being were indeed possible, as seems to be suggested by Muller's *The Unaccommodated Calvin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), Partee is not confident that "the fascinating (and endless) game of identifying and evaluating" the sources of a sixteenth-century human could yield it (p. xi). The advantage of a concentrated engagement with Calvin's own theology, maintains Partee, is in dealing with the "internal coherence" of a single mind (p. 3). Second, Partee is convinced that Calvin's sustained commitment to producing a comprehensive, ordered summary of his developing theology as the *Institutes* swelled from six to eighty chapters between 1536 and 1559 affords readers of the 1559 edition the reasonable expectation of understanding the doctrinal content of Calvin's mature thought because of the systematic context that Calvin himself provided for it. In other words, while there is clearly more to Calvin's theology than the 1559 *Institutes*, which, despite its own formidable stature, is dwarfed by the sum total of Calvin's commentaries, sermons, tracts, treatises, and letters, Partee thinks, unlike Muller, that the 1559 *Institutes* sufficiently locates Calvin within the immediate context—and adequately, accurately represents the broader content—of his own theological project (pp. 3–4). The third conviction that determines the scope of this book regards the ponderous collection of secondary scholarship on Calvin. Interpreting Calvin, rather than Calvin's interpreters, constitutes Partee's major concern.

Prospective readers should be aware, however, that while these three convictions determine the scope of this book, Partee is neither slavish nor overly fastidious with the application of his terms for engaging Calvin. For inasmuch that the *Institutes* is the place where Calvin ordered and expanded exegetically-based *loci communes* and *disputationes*, Partee discusses Calvin's theological opponents and allies, and consults other genres of Calvin's literary *corpus*, primarily his commentaries and polemical works. And although interpreting Calvin's own writing is Partee's major concern, his trenchant interaction with pertinent secondary sources is among the most salient strengths of this book.

Still more noteworthy in terms of prolegomena is Partee's discourse on his "three introductory conclusions," the fruit of long reflection for him, but submitted to readers at the book's outset (pp. 5–35). They are: (1) opponents of Calvin are profoundly wrong to caricature him as a gloomy, graceless, despotic, logician; (2) proponents of Calvin often believe he says what they want to hear; and (3) these presumed proponents of Calvin are actually "misponents" to the extent that they hold erroneous, modern assumptions about Calvin's thought respecting three major issues: the relation of system and systematic, the relation of the being of God to the knowledge of God, and the relation of the knowledge of self to the knowledge of God. Partee finds these assumptions most commonly held in three very different schools of Calvin interpretation: (1) the large institution of orthodox Calvinism, or Reformed scholasticism, which emphasizes Calvin's appeal to reason; (2) the small Schleiermacher sodality, which emphasizes Calvin's appeal to experience, or piety; and (3) the comparatively amorphous edifice of neo-orthodoxy, which emphasizes Calvin's appeal to the incarnate Word (p. xv).

Readers will find these schools of Calvin interpretation critiqued throughout the body of this book as the topic at hand occasions, then in a sustained fashion in Partee's highly instructive concluding excursus (pp. 299–330). But in his introductory discourse,

Partee's criticism is directed chiefly at the first school mentioned, or more precisely, at Muller, others who work out of his corner, the terrifically complex and volatile issue of continuity/discontinuity within the development of the post-Calvin Reformed tradition, and the nature of the Reformer's relationship to it. These scholars make a multi-faceted argument not for the uniformity between Calvin and the post-Calvin Reformed tradition, but rather for a prevailing continuity. Among the most crucial features of this argument is the isolation of theological method from content in the assessment of the later Reformed tradition, with its scholastic method being described as a scientific approach to university research and pedagogy that was devoid of any specific doctrinal content. This idea is supposed to help explain how Calvin's heirs espoused a method to which Calvin himself was, at the very least, disinclined, yet maintained a theological content Calvin would have approved.

Partee counters, "This notion that form and content do not interpenetrate strikes me as ludicrous. The way one asks a question may not finally determine the answer, but the former inevitably influences the latter" (p. 22). It is curious indeed, and not a little ironic, that a coterie of scholars so insistent as to the determinative influence of method upon content for contemporary Calvin research is of a different mind when it comes to Reformed scholasticism. At any rate, Partee contends for a prevailing discontinuity between Calvin and the post-Calvin Reformed tradition. To Partee's mind, Calvin was a systematic thinker, not a system builder; his burden was to confess the faith, not codify a tradition; his confession was grounded upon Christian convictions, not philosophical, or even theological, principles; his theology was designed more to edify the Christian heart within the Christian community than to exercise the intellects of academically-trained professionals within the university. Accordingly, Calvin's *Institutes* was not a mere historical parenthesis amidst a much larger period—spanning from approximately the late twelfth century through the late eighteenth century—dominated by the scholastic method, but a grand historical exception to it.

Because at varying points he sees the so-called orthodox Calvinist, Schleiermacherian, and neo-orthodox camps as unnatural habitats for the Reformer, Partee seeks to present a "no-school" exposition of Calvin's theology from the *Institutes*. This approach should not be taken to mean Partee is naïve to the fact that human impartiality is always partial, including his own. For Partee, a "no-school" exposition of the *Institutes* means (1) attempting to read Calvin as directly as possible while being neither ignorant of nor beholden to the schools of Calvin interpretation; and (2) examining the specific doctrines, or *loci*, of the *Institutes* in their order of appearance without appealing to any *leitmotif*, or "central dogma," with which to hold these doctrines together (p. xv). By taking this approach, Partee follows the example of François Wendel and his magisterial *Calvin: Origins and Development of His Religious Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

Of course, to say no "central dogma" runs through and binds together the *loci* of Calvin's *Institutes*—as a string runs through and binds together the beads of a necklace—is not to say this systematic thinker's *magnum opus* is without overall shape or structure. The absence of the former indicates that the *Institutes* is not an extended, linear deduction from a philosophical or theological first principle, while the presence of the latter invites Calvin interpreters to identify an organizational outline that fits most comfortably on the *Institutes* in order to facilitate their engagement with and understanding of this work, the final edition of which Calvin divided as follows: (1) Book I: *The Knowledge Of God The Creator*; (2) Book II: *The Knowledge Of God The Redeemer In Christ, First Disclosed To The Fathers Under The Law, And Then To Us In The Gospel*; (3) Book III: *The Way In Which We Receive The Grace Of Christ: What Benefits Come To Us From It, And What Effects Follow*; and (4) Book IV: *The External Means Or Aids By Which God Invites Us Into The Society Of Christ And Holds Us Therein*.

Partee deems four suggestions concerning the structure of the *Institutes* deserving of notice. The first suggestion, commonly associated with Benjamin Warfield, is that the structure of the *Institutes* reflects that of the Apostles' Creed, as both treat, in turn, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and Holy Catholic Church (pp. 35–36). The second suggestion, provided by Edward Dowey, is that the fourfold division of the *Institutes* reflects Calvin's twofold exposition of the knowledge of God as Creator and Redeemer, with Book I discussing the former and Books II, III, and IV the latter (pp. 36–39). A third, more recent suggestion by Philip Walker Butin is that the structure of the *Institutes* is trinitarian; he regards Books I, II, and III as devoted, in turn, to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and Book IV, devoted to the church, as a theological extrapolation of Calvin's discussion on the Holy Spirit (pp. 39–40). The fourth suggestion, to which Partee subscribes, is that the *Institutes* is most naturally divided into two equal parts, with its one major division clearly marked at the onset of Book III, where Calvin states, "First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value for us. Therefore, to share with us what he has received from the Father, he had to become ours and to dwell within us." In other words, Partee views the first part of the *Institutes* as Books I and II, containing Calvin's exposition of *God for us* as Creator and Redeemer, and the second part of the *Institutes* as Books III and IV, containing Calvin's exposition of *God with us*; that is, God with the redeemed person in Book III and with the redeemed community in Book IV. What this means, according to Partee, is that the structure of Calvin's *Institutes* reflects the heart of Calvin's theology, namely, Spirit-wrought, faith-appropriated union with Christ (pp. 40–43).

It is regrettable that Partee did not include, much less interact with, Muller's able and important thesis that the structure of Calvin's *Institutes* reflects the order of doctrinal *loci* in the Epistle to the Romans as identified by Luther's colleague in Wittenberg, Philip Melancthon (*The Unaccommodated Calvin*, pp. 118–39). Melancthon's influence upon Calvin was, to be sure, direct and estimable. But because that influence was neither singular nor itself determinative for Calvin, and because union with Christ is in fact a major Pauline emphasis, it seems unnecessary for the theses of Partee and Muller to be viewed in terms of absolute, mutual exclusivity. *JETS* readers may be aware that this opinion would not likely be shared by Thomas L. Wenger who, working out of Muller's corner, recently published an unduly caustic criticism of a few scholars whose theses concerning union with Christ in Calvin's theology are, if not identical with, similar to Partee's ("The New Perspective On Calvin: Responding To Recent Calvin Interpretations," *JETS* 50 [2007]: 311–28). Although he was not permitted the last word in the exchange, Marcus Johnson responded to this criticism, correctly contending that Wenger's article was misleading in title, myopic in the selection of scholars it critiqued, less than fair in its treatment of those scholars it did critique, and dubious in both argument and conclusion ("New Or Nuanced Perspective On Calvin? A Reply To Thomas Wenger," *JETS* 51 [2008]: 543–58). Wenger and Johnson should not be viewed as speaking for Muller and Partee, respectively. Yet in different ways, each proves that union with Christ is an important doctrine for Calvin and his interpreters, and together they offer a timely entrée for Partee's effort to demonstrate the impress of union with Christ across the "full sweep" of Calvin's theology.

Partee's effort is refreshing, but his "perspective" is not particularly new, and his interpretation is not at all novel. I suspect that his bold criticisms of Calvin's proponents, especially those most influenced by Muller, will not go unrequited. Yet on so formidable and variegated a journey as a topic-by-topic trek through Calvin's *Institutes*, even those travelers sympathetic with Partee should expect to encounter small bones of contention

here and there along the way. For these travelers, however, the occasional misgiving will be mitigated by the constancy of Partee's theological incisiveness and literary eloquence on the one hand, and his great desire to exhibit Calvin's present significance for Christian understanding and faith, on the other. To readers who are contemplating their first venture into Calvin's thought, or teachers seeking to give their college and/or seminary students a preliminary, working acquaintance with Calvin, I suggest T. H. L. Parker's more modest, still superb, *Calvin: An Introduction to His Thought* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995). To enthusiasts of the Reformer, however, I submit that Partee's book deserves to be ranked above Wilhelm Niesel's *The Theology of Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956; repr. Cambridge: James Clarke, 2002) and alongside Wendel's *Calvin* in that small collection of magisterial surveys of Calvin's thought with which both present and future Calvin interpreters will be obliged to reckon.

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*The Law is Not of Faith: Essays on Works and Grace in the Mosaic Covenant.* Bryan D. Estelle, J. V. Fesko, and David VanDrunen, eds. Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R, 2009, 358 pp., \$25.00 paper.

This collection of essays is a welcome addition to the literature on Paul and the law, and related topics. It comes on the heels of more than three decades of discussion and dispute originating on the campus of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia, debate centered upon the teachings of systematics professor Norman Shepherd (who began as my doctoral advisor in 1977). The topic of the Mosaic covenant would become the focus of my own academic studies—from the mid-70s down to the present. *The Law is Not of Faith* stands as a compelling answer to many of the questions left unresolved in contemporary Evangelical-Reformed discussion concerning the Mosaic law, especially as that bears on the doctrine of justification and the covenants of God spanning the history of redemptive revelation. All of the contributors are graduates of the Westminster seminaries, some currently teaching at Westminster West. Each of the three editors is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a denomination torn apart by the theological controversy. The dispute is by no means limited to the Westminster/OPC community, however. Reference in the book is made to the Presbyterian Church in America (other denominations might well have been mentioned). More broadly, the subject of this book directly addresses ongoing differences among covenant and dispensational theologians (notably, among progressive dispensationalists).

The editors' "Introduction" begins with a lengthy fictional account of a seminarian's examination in a court of the church on the subject that for many long years has occupied the minds of presbyters and members of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. That subject is the doctrine of the republication of the original covenant of works under Moses. Contributors to this collected writing are understood to have reached a consensus in interpretation, at least in its main outline. They share "a general sympathy with the republication idea and a general desire to recover serious theological reflection on issues related to it." At the same time they acknowledge a measure of diversity in Reformed exposition, Reformation and modern, and they welcome healthy discussion of "important issues for the doctrine and life of the church" (p. 20). Among the important theological points requisite for the exposition of the doctrine of republication are these: the doctrine of probation in connection with Adam, Israel, and Christ (which is directly related to

Estelle's discussion of "entitlement to heaven"); the idea of a national covenant of works (introduced by Charles Hodge, who "raises the issue of the grand narrative of redemptive history, namely, the idea of Israel as God's son who prefigures God's only begotten Son" [p. 13]); and the shift in discussion from matters concerning *ordo salutis* to matters concerning *historia salutis*, anticipating the rise of the distinct discipline of biblical theology, standing alongside systematics (or church dogmatics).

Despite superficial appearances, the editors rightly insist, "The doctrine of republication is not in any way dispensationalism" (p. 14). One of the perplexing questions is why this Reformed doctrine has fallen upon such hard times: "How is it that such a dominant concern with so many Reformed luminaries in the past slipped off the table of discussion and was no longer, generally speaking, a matter that exercised the best minds among theologians, ministers, ruling elders, and educated laypersons" (p. 15)? The editors proceed to ask: "Did such silence, dare we say historical ignorance, lead to a kind of unwitting torpor in the thinking of ministers, exegetes, and theologians in areas of theological inquiry such as the nature of the law, grace, typology, and merit" (*ibid*)? Another perplexing question is why John Murray abandoned historic Reformed teaching in his exposition of covenant theology. It is best not to label Murray's aberrant teaching on the biblical covenants "monocovenantal," as the editors confusingly do (p. 16). Murray's preference was to restrict the term covenant to redemptive provision, the post-fall economy of sovereign, electing grace. Following the lead of Karl Barth, the theology of Norman Shepherd and Richard Gaffin is indisputably monocovenantal. According to this viewpoint, grace (as opposed to meritorious human works) is viewed as the single way of inheritance/reward in the covenants established by God with humanity, in each and every instance, over the course of biblical history. These latter exponents of neoorthodox doctrine have jettisoned the merit principle of works altogether, the law-principle operative in the creation covenant and republished (in some form) under the Mosaic administration. Revisionist teaching at Westminster Seminary has produced no small amount of "agitation in the church" (p. 17). What is principally at stake in this dispute is the Protestant-Reformed doctrine of justification by faith alone. Though there are complexities to the doctrine of the republication of the covenant of works in the Mosaic economy of redemption, apprehension of this biblical teaching is "simple enough for a child to understand" (p. 19). I concur fully.

Given the diversity of thought in this collection of essays on the subject at hand, it is best that we begin with the essays of the editors—one historical, one biblical, and one theological. J. V. Fesko ("Calvin and Witsius on the Mosaic Covenant") lays out the basic contour of Reformed thinking by comparing two prominent, distinguished Reformed systematicians. He notes that "[T]he differences lay in the emphasis that Witsius places upon the use and role of typology in his explanation of the Mosaic covenant" (p. 27). Fesko concludes: "It is the development of this covenantal framework, a development of nomenclature rather than theological substance, that one finds in Witsius's explanation of the Mosaic covenant" (p. 35). But then the picture becomes a bit murky. Fesko indicates that, according to Witsius, the legal arrangement under Moses proffered salvation on grounds of works-righteousness (p. 37). This statement, as it stands, is akin to the teaching of early dispensationalism. Better is the view of Calvin explained by Fesko two pages later.

Bryan Estelle ("Leviticus 18:5 and Deuteronomy 30:1–14 in Biblical Theological Development: Entitlement to Heaven Foreclosed and Proffered") brings the book's discussion to its profoundest level, insofar as it addresses the role and significance of biblical typology. Sound biblico-systematic exegesis ultimately will resolve the dispute in contemporary Reformed theology (building on the work and insights of those who have preceded). Surprisingly, there is no reference here or anywhere in the book to Kline's fine work *Glory in our Midst*. This mature work is essential reading in covenant the-

ology. Problems in theological formulation (noted with regard to Fesko's understanding of the operation of the law-principle under Moses) resurface in Estelle's essay. He entertains the notion that the works-inheritance principle enunciated in Leviticus 18:5 posits a hypothetical salvation-by-works. Better to speak of the "universal implications for the works principle" (p. 115). The difference in formulation is highly important for biblical-theological exegesis and Reformed systematics. A dispensational construction also surfaces in connection with Estelle's understanding of the letter/Spirit contrast in the writings of Jeremiah, whose teachings are anticipated by Moses in Deuteronomy 30. It must be stated emphatically that the same regenerating, empowering Spirit is at work in the salvation of God's elect in the Mosaic economy as in the new; thus, the letter/Spirit contrast must be explained in other terms. Surely it is the case that there is a greater emphasis on the individual (the Spiritual/eschatological) in the new covenant, a decided shift from emphasis on the corporate (the physical/temporal) in the old. Estelle rightly highlights the connection between the typical and antitypical levels of life in the land of Canaan (p. 118, n. 45). This introduces us to some of the richness and complexity of Reformed biblical-theological exposition of the Mosaic institution and economy.

In recent years David VanDrunen ("Natural Law and the Works Principle under Adam and Moses") has become a champion of natural law doctrine. He begins his essay by observing: "No study of the Mosaic law in the Reformed tradition can hope to attain any degree of completeness without attention to the idea of natural law. The ideas of natural law and of the works principle in the Mosaic covenant in fact share an intriguingly similar history. While both concepts were standard features of early Reformed theology—natural law unambiguously and the works principle in the Mosaic covenant with some variation—both have fallen upon hard times in Reformed thought in the last century [especially in the wake of Barthianism]" (p. 282, also p. 288). Special attention is given to the apostle Paul's teaching in Romans 2:6–15. Here I take exception to VanDrunen's exegesis. In my reading the text indicates that the "doers of the law" are the ones to inherit eternal life. This passage does not tell us *how* this is attained; for an answer to that question we must delve further into Paul's epistle. Pertinent here is the comment of Horton: "Our obedience is not the basis or condition of this justification, but precisely for this reason the law's true purpose can begin even now to be realized in us: perfectly in our representative head, and in us in principle by the new birth as a result of his life, death, and resurrection" (p. 330). Additional clarity needs to be given to the notion of a "strict" versus a "soft" works principle, especially in regards to the issue of Israel's retention of the land of Canaan and her prosperity in the land (cf. p. 301, n. 30). Better is Meredith Kline's take on the distinction between holy and common institutions—the functioning of natural law in the two respective spheres of administration and governance—and the sharply antithetical contrast between the two inheritance-principles, law and grace. I would suggest that the idea of natural law is more elastic (and knowledge of it more elusive) in the post-fall epoch than VanDrunen's view seems to allow.

The remaining essayists can be surveyed more briefly. D. G. Hart ("Princeton and the Law: Enlightened and Reformed") offers a defense of the soundness of the Princeton theologians and faults her critics for abandoning—knowingly or unknowingly—the traditional law/gospel distinction as that bears on the Reformed doctrine of the covenants. This entry nicely complements the article by VanDrunen, underscoring the close tie between natural law and the covenant of works. Brenton Ferry's essay ("Works in the Mosaic Covenant: A Reformed Taxonomy") closes out Part One ("Historical Studies") by forging a taxonomy covering the array of theological opinion on the subject of the republication of the original covenant of works under Moses. Disappointingly, Ferry's analysis is not entirely helpful, an analysis that results in a partial garbling of issues, however subtle in nuance. Clearer and sharper distinction is required, given the fact

that Reformed interpretation of the Mosaic covenant from the time of the Reformation to the present is replete with vagueness and ambiguity in expression, including some outright contradiction. The Reformed tradition as a whole has been unclear how best to explain the operation of the antithetical principles of law and grace within the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace. Ferry's readiness to find continuity and agreement among expositors of federal theology fails to reckon with the untidy side of doctrinal development, prior to theological maturation. Hence, his readings and conclusions are subject to debate. And with respect to the Westminster controversy in particular, failure to acknowledge change and development in Kline's thinking on the covenants only distorts an accurate reading of the history of Reformed interpretation, past and present.

The bulk of essays appear in Part Two ("Biblical Studies"), and for good reason. Given the long-standing dispute over the doctrine of the republication of the covenant of works in the Mosaic economy and decades of erroneous teaching emanating from the Westminster seminaries, this collection of essays is a vindication of the Scripture principle, that Scripture is its own best interpreter. In the final analysis it is the exegesis of Scripture that brings resolution to all theological controversy. Richard Belcher's article ("The King, the Law, and Righteousness in the Psalms: A Foundation for Understanding the Work of Christ") deals mostly with the doctrine of the justification of sinners on grounds of the imputed righteousness of Christ. Belcher directly counters the view of Shepherd and the Federal Visionists, here represented in the writings of Peter Leithart. Byron G. Curtis ("Hosea 6:7 and Covenant-Breaking like/at Adam") handles a central OT text, one which has played an important role in the rise and development of covenant theology. In making his case for the covenant made with Adam at creation, some interaction with other texts, notably Isaiah 24:5, would have strengthened his argument.

Indicative of underlying disagreement among our essayists is Guy Waters' exposition ("Romans 10:5 and the Covenant of Works"), which is out of sync with this volume of writings intent on upholding the doctrine of the republication of the covenant of works under Moses, a doctrine Waters explicitly rejects. Explanation of its inclusion may lie in what I see to be the major flaw in this study, inconsistency in theological analysis and failure to hold the line unequivocally. In his taxonomy Ferry makes the attempt to locate Murray's peculiar interpretation within the parameters of Reformed orthodox federalism. Gordon, for one, sees matters quite differently (see below). The position Ferry identifies as the "principle of abstraction" is incompatible with the doctrine of the republication of the original covenant of works in the Mosaic economy of redemption. Furthermore, the moral law (and natural law) does not, in and of itself, include the probationary element of eschatological reward for perfect obedience. The former is an expression of natural revelation, the latter of special revelation (these two forms of divine revelation work in tandem).

The articles by David Gordon ("Abraham and Sinai Contrasted in Galatians 3:6–14") and S. M. Baugh ("Galatians 5:1–6 and Personal Obligation: Reflections on Paul and the Law") conclude Part Two. Gordon aims his critique against Westminster Seminary's most respected systematician, the late John Murray. (Here the author follows in my wake. Meredith Kline, likewise, regarded Murray's deviation from historic Reformed theology as inexcusable.) As one has come to expect, Baugh provides thoughtful insight and careful reflection on issues vigorously disputed within the Westminster community of scholars and pastors. The second of two entries in Part Three ("Theological Studies") is penned by Michael Horton ("Obedience is Better than Sacrifice"). He astutely remarks: "The idea of the imputation of the active obedience of Christ has come under attack by some in contemporary Reformed circles. At the heart of these misgivings seems to be the notion of merit as a legitimate category in the Creator-creature relationship" (p. 315). On the other side of the dispute, it must be noted that the views of Shepherd

and Gaffin are substantively identical. Even though Gaffin acknowledges the active obedience of Christ in imputation, he repudiates the notion of merit with respect to the original covenantal arrangement God made with the First Adam. In so doing he destroys the Pauline parallel between the two federal heads and undercuts the need for the active, substitutionary obedience of Christ as the meritorious ground of the believer's justification. The difference is more than semantics.

In drawing this review to a close, I return once more to Murray's exposition of the covenants. There needs to be a meeting of the minds: On the one hand, Waters remarks that "Some within the Reformed churches are gravitating toward monocovenantalism (often not without grave consequences for their doctrine of justification)" (p. 239). On the other hand, Gordon castigates Murray for his "implicit monocovenantalism" (p. 253). Meanwhile, the book as a whole sets out to counter the worst of these unwelcome developments within the Westminster/OPC community. Interaction with the writings of disputants on the other side, e.g., Sinclair Ferguson and Peter Lillback (as well as interaction with the work of Gaffin) is requisite. Additionally, far greater attention must be given to the doctrine of probation and the crucial role of meritorious human obedience in the successful fulfillment of the original covenant of works. Also neglected in this volume is discussion of decretive election as that informs covenant theology (what is distinct from Israel's national, theocratic election, an essential component in the system of biblical typology). Commendably, the book serves to uphold the teaching of catholic Reformed orthodoxy, as advanced by the federal theologians. I extend a personal word of appreciation for the due diligence of our essayists. It is hoped that this volume will, in turn, commend renewed study and discussion—for the sake of the gospel of saving grace.

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*God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer.* By Bart D. Ehrman. New York: Harper One, 2008, x + 304 pp., \$25.00.

*God's Problem* is the latest popular book by Bart Ehrman, the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. An alumnus of Moody Bible Institute, Wheaton College, and Princeton Theological Seminary (Ph.D.), Ehrman has written or edited more than twenty books, including a widely distributed college level survey of the NT published by Oxford University Press. With uncommon distinction, Ehrman has achieved "celebrity" status through appearances in *Time*, NBC's *Dateline*, *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart*, CNN, The History Channel, and NPR.

*God's Problem* begins autobiographically with Ehrman's upbringing in a Christian home to Christian parents. He learned Bible stories from his mother at bedtime, was baptized in a congregational church, was reared Episcopalian, became an altar boy at age twelve, eventually had what he describes as a "born-again" experience at a youth rally, studied Scripture to the point where he could quote large portions of the Bible and, as mentioned, eventually attended Moody, Wheaton, and Princeton before pastoring Princeton Baptist Church for a year. But in his early adulthood he became irreversibly disillusioned by the Bible and Christianity's inability to explain reality. Critical study led to the conclusion that "the Bible was a very human book with all the marks of having come from human hands: discrepancies, contradictions, errors, and different perspectives of different authors living at different times in different countries and writing for

different reasons to different audiences with different needs” (p. 3). He continues: “I could no longer reconcile the claims of faith with the facts of life. . . . In particular, I could no longer explain how there can be a good and all-powerful God actively involved with this world, given the state of things. . . . The problem of suffering became for me the problem of faith” (p. 3).

Disillusioned with the Bible and its inability to explain reality, Ehrman left the Christian faith in pain. Today he testifies, “I no longer go to church, no longer believe, no longer consider myself a Christian” (p. 2). Moreover, though he calls himself an agnostic, Ehrman is aggressively anti-Christian and anti-theism. Jesus was a first-century apocalyptic Jew, but he was not the Messiah, he was not raised from the dead, and he is not coming back. The biblical view of God is mythical and obsolete. The reality of suffering in the world makes impossible the existence of an all-powerful and all-loving God. Suffering is “caused by circumstances we can’t control and for reasons we can’t understand. . . . We avoid it as much as we can, we try to relieve it in others whenever possible, and we go on with life, enjoying our time here on earth as much as we can, until the time comes for us to expire” (pp. 195–96). *God’s Problem* thus concludes, “What we have in the here and now is all that there is” (p. 278).

Textual and redaction criticism are the two leading phenomena that convinced Ehrman of the Bible’s deficiency as a trustworthy guide to truth. That the ancient scribes infused into the text differences, embellishments, and subtle contradictions eliminates for Ehrman the likelihood of supernatural inspiration, much less authorship. Redaction criticism provides irrefutable evidence that the Gospel writers embellished their compositions with personal biases to alter the “real” history of Jesus. The differences among the Gospels prove irreconcilable contradictions, which would not be present if one God were inspiring them all. Ehrman’s disillusionment with biblical credibility extends further into the nooks and crannies of biblical studies down to isolated sayings and events that he finds erroneous—most emphatically the mistaken expectation of an imminent coming of the kingdom (a false expectation he traces back to John the Baptist and Jesus).

These general views carry over to establish Ehrman’s pessimism for appraising the problem of world suffering. He portrays the Bible as an eclectic body of disparate documents that offer at least five different explanations for the problem of suffering: (1) Suffering is caused by God as punishment for sin (the classical view); (2) suffering is a consequence of the sins of others; (3) suffering brings about greater good (redemptive suffering); (4) suffering is a mystery impossible of explanation (Job and Ecclesiastes); and (5) God will terminate evil and suffering in the future (apocalyptic theodicy). These mutually exclusive, incompatible views mirror contradicting human perspectives on the problem of suffering and undercut biblical unity. Moreover, they all fall short of reality except for the fourth view, which Ehrman adopts: “I have to admit that at the end of the day, I do have a biblical view of suffering. As it turns out, it is the view put forth in the book of Ecclesiastes” (p. 276).

Ehrman’s criticisms apparently strike many receptive readers as revolutionary and historically astute. With juiced-up marketing spin and jacket cover blurbs, *God’s Problem* advertises itself with clichés like “serious inquiry,” “energy,” “eloquently told,” “wonderful book,” “riveting,” and “Ehrman has done it again.” In truth the book does indeed substantiate Ecclesiastes—not one of its apparent theodicies, but its true and famous adage, “There is nothing new under the sun.”

Textual criticism and redaction criticism are now generations old in scholarly usage and are widely practiced by believing and unbelieving scholars alike. Ehrman’s refusal to see either as complementary with the divine inspiration of Scripture is simply his opinion, which is not shared by others in the field who perceive Scripture as the product of God’s inspiring his prophets and apostles to speak his message through his human

spokespersons' languages, vocabularies, figures of speech, genres, local illustrations, and individual personalities in the historical contexts in which they lived. That these messages had a historical context then does not eliminate their potential for validly informing believers of God's will today. Further, scribal errors undercut Scripture no more than a random typographical mistake or transposed word would in an otherwise accurate document. Of course the Bible is a human book in the sense that it was written by humans to humans and copied and transmitted by humans to humans; such indeed is the Bible's own testimony. But the humanness of the Bible does not disprove its inspiration by God and its revelation of God as witnessed by the Bible's human authors. Ehrman's age old observations simply fall short of disproving the biblical authors' inspired revelations of God and his plan of salvation through Christ.

For the most part Ehrman builds his skepticism within the safe confines of unknowns that cannot be disproved (or proved, for that matter!). Who can disprove that there were two authors of Job? Who can disprove that the prophets predicted events after the fact (*ex eventu*)? Who can disprove that Jesus did not rise from the dead? No one can, of course, and that provides Ehrman a safety net.

However, Ehrman's credibility falters surprisingly in the arena of scholarly competence, his apparent strength. Indeed, on occasion he is categorically wrong. For example, he is mistaken when he writes "all will be made right in the afterlife" is "not found in the prophets but in other biblical authors" (p. 9). Is not Isaiah 25:6–9, the classic OT statement on this subject, prophetic? Again, he is simply wrong when he avers, "For ancient peoples, however, there was never, or almost never, a question of whether God (or the gods) actually existed" (p. 26). To the contrary, the Psalms speak of disbelief as a common vice: "The wicked, in the haughtiness of his countenance, does not seek Him. All his thoughts are 'There is no God'" (Psalm 10:4; cf. Pss. 14:1; 36:1; 53:1; Rom 3:18). Similarly, Ehrman's reduction of Job's poetry to a message of inactive submission—"The answer to suffering is that there is no answer, and we should not look for one" (p. 188)—is categorically wrong. For at the end of the poetic section just prior to the epilogue, Job does repent in the presence of God, not because of divine intimidation or Job's own sin but because of a direct encounter with God that reveals wonderful things previously unseen: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. 'Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have declared that which I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know." . . . "I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees you; therefore I retract, and I repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:2–3, 5–6). Finally, Ehrman's invention of an agnostic Ecclesiastes simply misrepresents biblical Ecclesiastes's confidence in God's existence: "Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few" (Eccl 5:2; cf. 3:11, 14; 7:29).

It is problematic that Ehrman does not model rigorous critical thinking in reaching these conclusions. He routinely assumes that his opinions are unqualified facts without weighing alternative schools of thought, as he does when he presumes the accuracy of his division of Job into two competing theodicies written by two different authors.

In his treatment of the NT, the stark fallacy is again Ehrman's when he boasts, "But the view that Jesus was himself God is not a view shared by most of the writers of the New Testament. It is, in fact, a theological view that developed rather late in the early Christian movement: it is not to be found, for example, in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, or Luke—let alone in the teachings of the historical Jesus" (p. 273). But found it is! In Matthew Jesus is Immanuel, God with us (Matt 1:23). In Mark, after John prepares the way for the Lord, it is Jesus who comes as Lord, thereby equating Jesus with Yahweh on the basis of Isaiah 40:3. In Luke, Jesus performs a pattern of miracles (Luke 7:22), which fulfill expectations of what God would do on the day of the Lord

(Isa 26:19; 29:18; 35:5–6; 4Q521). The resulting equation is that Jesus is Lord, as his ascension into heaven affirms (Acts 1:9–11). And, of course, Jesus' equation with God is explicit in John's Gospel (e.g. John 1:1) as it is in Paul, where God bestows on Jesus the name that is above every name, which, of course, for the first-century Jew was none other than God's special name YHWH (Phil 2:9–11). How Ehrman can so baldly misrepresent these elementary truths I cannot explain, especially in light of Larry Hurtado's recent widely distributed monograph on the subject (*Lord Jesus Christ*, 2003).

Ehrman generates still more Christological misunderstanding when he appeals to the corporate and not individual identities of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 and the "one like a son of man" of Daniel 7:13–14. He simplistically asserts that these names represented Israel in the OT, and the first Christians later wrongly projected them on the individual Jesus. Of course Ehrman is right that the Suffering Servant and the "one like a son of man" were originally designations for the people of Israel—as was also the name Son of God (Exod 4:22). However, he fails to explain that the first Christians attributed these titles to Jesus expressly because of their corporate association with Israel. Just as Paul identified Jesus as a second Adam who represented all humanity in his obedience and sacrifice (Rom 5:12–19), so also did the Gospel writers identify Jesus as Servant, Son of Man, and Son of God, who represented all Israel in his obedience and death. An individual king's representation of the corporate nation he ruled was a common conception in the ancient world. Surely, Ehrman is aware of this. Of course, Jesus was an individual, but he represented the entire nation of Israel in his vicarious, substitutionary work—hence, the placard over the cross, which read *King of the Jews*. Again, these observations are not fresh. Generations of scholars have recognized the Christological significance of corporate solidarity.

Ehrman also posits an idiosyncratic view of Paul: "It was Paul's apocalyptic assumptions about the world that most affected his theology" (p. 237). Agreed, Paul certainly had an apocalyptic worldview (e.g. Eph 6; 1 Thess 4–5; 2 Thess 2); however, according to Paul's undisputed letters, his radical theology was the consequence of his literal encounter with the resurrected Christ, not a socially contrived conceptual worldview (Gal 1:12; 1 Cor 15:8; Phil 3:1–11).

In general Ehrman's preoccupation with theodicy is also idiosyncratic in view of widespread scholarly caution against reading theodicy into books that do not have as their intent the justification of God in the face of evil. Ehrman's statement that "Apocalypticism is nothing so much as an ancient kind of theodicy" (p. 25) is a gross oversimplification in this respect. Similarly simplistic is his sharp division of the Bible into disparate contradictory units. He does not weigh at all the widespread unity within the Bible, the systemic interplay among prophetic, wisdom, and apocalyptic writers, and the historical reality that theological unity served as a control for the canonization of the Bible. His working axiom that different means incompatible is remarkably simplistic.

If his scholarship is so obviously suspect, how can we explain Ehrman's popularity? First, he has found a formula that works for the popular secular market. His blend of emotive personal autobiography, negative caricatures of evangelicals, unbalanced statistics and anecdotes of world suffering, sweeping tongue and cheek Bible summaries on a second year college level, and bald simplistic conclusions mirror to a degree the foreclosed stereotypes of secular culture. He satisfies casual skeptics by reinforcing what they want to hear and already believe—that Christianity is a self-contradicting fairy tale. Second, Ehrman's is a wealthy feel good agnosticism: "I think we should work hard to make the world—the one we live in—the most pleasing place it can be *for ourselves*. We should love and be loved. We should cultivate our friendships, enjoy our intimate relationships, cherish our family lives. We should make money and spend money. The more the better. We should enjoy good food and drink. We should eat out and order unhealthy desserts, and we should cook steaks on the grill and drink Bordeaux.

We should walk around the block, work in the garden, watch basketball, and drink beer. We should travel and read books and go to museums and look at art and listen to music. We should drive nice cars and have nice homes. We should make love, have babies, and raise families. We should do what we can to love life—it's a gift and it will not be with us for long" (p. 277; italics Ehrmans). "Drink beer, make love, watch basketball"—Is it really surprising that Ehrman's lectures are popular with college students at Chapel Hill? "Make money, spend money, cook steaks, drink Bordeaux, eat unhealthy desserts"—is it really surprising that Ehrman is popular with secular American suburbia? He makes people feel good about what they're already doing—an agnosticized wealth gospel of self-centered capitalism.

In the end, the Christianity that Ehrman refutes is a false, convoluted Christianity configured upon caricatures, total disregard of benevolent Christian ministry, an artificial and idiosyncratic Bible, and an Ehrmanian image of what God must be like in order to exist. If his idea of God is not real, then God is not real. Sad though it is, Ehrman's deconversion (as he calls it) is, by his own unintended confession, not from an authentic faith but from the misguided impressions of youth. One senses that, for Ehrman, Christianity is a fantasy because its association with his past makes it so. His confident criticisms build upon the rather arrogant assertion that because he has never had a real relationship with Christ, then no one else can legitimately have one either.

What can evangelical scholars learn from Bart Ehrman? First, he reminds us of the importance of critical thinking and judicious scholarly criticism. Criticism of false teaching is a responsibility Christians inherit from Jesus and the apostles and is fully compatible with Christian grace and agape love. Love detached from truth is not love. Second, evangelical scholars should learn from Ehrman's foibles. Though authored by an academic celebrity, *God's Problem* is fraught with lazy mistakes in substance. But one does not have to peruse far into the latest *CBD* catalog to discover that the Christian publishing industry suffers the same vulnerability. We have our own Christian celebrity authors whose books are sometimes published on the basis of name and not substance. Christian publishers beware. Elton Trueblood's adage has never been more true: "Christian shoddy is still shoddy." Third, Ehrman's "willful blindness" to the reality of God's presence in our world must be met with still more aggressive sacrificial Christian ministry to the poor and suffering. The church is doing this globally in amazing ways, but as Paul challenges in 1 Thess 4:1–10, we must "excel still more." Finally, even after the most rigorous efforts, evangelicals should expect and be prepared to press on through continued secular skepticism: "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor 1:18).

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*An Educated Clergy: Scottish Theological Education and Training in the Kirk and Secession, 1560–1850.* By Jack C. Whytock. Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2007, xxvi + 458 pp., £29.99.

Denominational ministerial and seminary committees, independent boards of trustees, administrations, Bible college and seminary faculties, local church pastors and elders routinely wrestle with the task of educating and training men in preparation for ordained ministry. What methods, content, and parameters should be used in preparing men for the solemn and high calling of the ministry of the Word and sacraments? Current contexts and cultures are evaluated, accreditation standards consulted, and

competitors assessed. But how much of the endeavor is pursued as if it were the invention of the present generation? Too often the arrogance of the present ignores the accumulated wisdom of past generations; particularly when they were generations who sought to think biblically and live doxologically. The wise and reflective turn to the past is admirably accomplished in Jack Whytock's *An Educated Clergy: Scottish Theological Education and Training in the Kirk and Secession, 1560–1850*, which provides a groundbreaking survey of the methodologies and content of Scottish theological education from the Reformation era to the nineteenth century. Originally a doctoral dissertation for the University of Wales, Lampeter, the work has been published as part of Paternoster's *Studies in Christian History and Thought* series.

The book is divided into three sections. The first, "Theological Education and Training in the Kirk," spans seven chapters, examining both continental Reformed theological education as well as six historical periods in the theological education and training of the Church of Scotland, between 1560 and 1860. Unlike the others in the book, and despite its informative content, the first chapter, a survey of Reformed theological training and education on the European continent in the post-Reformation era, is weak in style and organization. An intermittent awkwardness in the verbally directed style is heightened by the numerous "brief" and not so brief excursions it accompanies. The net effect of the verbal manner and tangents is that the reader is left feeling the author is deciding "aloud" where to go next. The remainder of the work, however, is dramatically better.

Leaving continental Europe behind, the second chapter takes the reader to Reformation era Scotland. Whytock begins by introducing the reader to the 1560 *First Book of Discipline*, including its outlines for the application of Reformation theology and practice to the method and content of theological education and training. Noting that "training for the ministry was to be supervised by those who possessed a learning which resulted in sound exposition of Scripture coupled with godly learning," Whytock shows that in 1560, Scottish Reformers thought it "better to leave a parish vacant than to place an unqualified man in the parish as an ordained minister." (26). The *First Book of Discipline* gave instructions for a pastoral training process within the church, allowing men to develop in stages from "reader to exhorter to minister" (p. 27). This process included the development of the exercise, an examination process before the presbytery where prospective exhorters expounded scriptural passages while being assessed and critiqued by ordained ministers of the church. The *First Book* also contained a nascent vision for the reformation of the three medieval Scottish universities, with the restructuring of theological education to a curriculum centered on "biblical languages, exegesis and divinity" (p. 29).

The third chapter, dealing with the second period of Scottish Reformed education, begins in the 1570s with Andrew Melville's educational reforms—the *nova erectio*, or new foundation, at Glasgow College—along with the subsequent influence of Melville's improvements in the reforms made at St. Andrews, King's and Marischal Colleges in Aberdeen, and the newly created Edinburgh College under Robert Rollock's leadership. The chapter ably surveys both methods and curricula, along with the theological character and trends in the divinity programs at these institutions, comparatively placing them in the larger context of their historical antecedents and surroundings. Again, Whytock examines the universities and their function in relation to the church. He continues tracing and assessing the church's function in the governance and assessment of men training for the ministry at the universities, particularly through the ongoing use and development of the exercise. Less evident is the role of the church as an ecclesiastical body in the governance of the university divinity programs. It appears that ecclesiastical influence on university divinity programs during this period was primarily the initiative of parish ministers teaching divinity within the universities:

change occurred as they felt the need for continued reformation and development of theological education following the pattern expressed in the *First Book of Discipline*.

The “age of the Presbyterian ascendancy” (p. 56), or Covenanter period (1638–1661), is the focus of the fourth chapter. The period was characterized by a stronger involvement on the part of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in the universities, particularly regarding the education and training of men for the ministry. In 1638, the Church expected confessional subscription from both professors of theology and potential students. Adoption of the Westminster Standards further impacted theological education, since the Standards functioned not only as a confessional statement, but also contained a form of church government including standards for the examination of prospective ministers. Whytock specifically notes the influence of five leading Covenanter theologians in the universities: Samuel Rutherford, Robert Baillie, David Dickson, Patrick Gillespie, and John Row, along with that of Robert Leighton, who became the Bishop of Dunblane. Dickson, in his role as minister and divinity professor, worked “to create an expositor’s library for students and parish ministers” (62), enlisting fellow theologians and ministers in the formation of a series of commentaries on the Old and New Testaments, and creating a series of theological lectures on the Westminster Confession of Faith, which functioned as a text on systematic and contemporary theology. The chapter concludes with a helpful summary of both the content and methods used in this period for the education and training of divinity students.

Whytock’s chapter on the period of Episcopal Restoration (1662–1689) challenges the characterization that this was a period of educational decline in the Church of Scotland, seeking to rehabilitate both the piety and the quality of Episcopalian theological education. Using Gilbert Burnet and Henry Scougal as case studies, Whytock argues that Episcopalians continued manifesting the influence of aspects of Reformed theology within a broader synthesis, along with a commitment to strong standards in the exercises before Diocesan Synods, academic quality in the universities, and a concern for the spiritual well-being of their students. The theological parameters of the period are qualified particularly by Episcopalian James Garden’s loss of professorship in 1697 after his refusal to subscribe to the Westminster Confession; Whytock sees this as indicative of the theological tendencies at King’s College during the Episcopal Restoration period. The chapter ably presents the realities of theological education and training under more moderate Episcopalians, yet Whytock’s note that Burnet “fell into conflict with his own party” (p. 87) begs the question: does Burnet as a figure with “moderate sympathies” (p. 87) serve better as an exception than an exemplar of the Episcopalian period of theological training and education? This question is heightened by both a lack of assessment of theological education and training under Burnet’s successors at Glasgow after 1674, and a general lack of comparative reference to the concerns, if not the methods of theological training and education, of those persecuted Presbyterians and Covenanters outside the formal bounds of the Church of Scotland during this period.

The sixth and seventh chapters cover the period of the Revolution Settlement (1690–1825) to the era of the Universities’ Commission (1826–1860). Whytock begins by showing that “in the 1690’s the General Assembly retraced much of the same ground of the 1640’s and 1650’s” (p. 91). Confessional subscription for ministers, probationers, and entrants into the ministry was reimplemented. As the author notes, however, “in actuality, Socinianism was tolerated in many quarters, although a stringent subscription formula was in place” (p. 92). The practice of presbytery exercises continued, along with the development of procedures for student licensure. There was a growing emphasis on the need for denominational bursary assistance for divinity students. Presbytery-supported theological libraries were established in towns and cities distant from the four universities. Whytock also chronicles a new appearance relevant to theological education: the

eighteenth century development of student and clerical societies for theological presentations, discussions, and debates. University divinity programs also saw further advancement in their curricula and methodologies. As a ground-breaking study, Whytock's descriptions and assessment in each of these areas is comprehensive, providing a wealth of historical insight and information, along with suggestions for further research.

The second, and finest, part of the book is comprised of another seven chapters, focusing on "Theological Education and Training in the Secession" from 1733 to 1847. The early Secession church, or Associate Presbytery, formed primarily as a result of controversy in the Church of Scotland over patronage; apart from the Covenanters remaining outside the Church of Scotland after 1690, the Seceders of 1733 were the first of the new Scottish Presbyterian denominations forming out of disagreement with the Church of Scotland's polity and theology. Whytock's assessment of the various streams of the Secession churches is both thorough and tightly focused, opening an almost untouched realm of church history to readers. Due to the size of the Secession churches and their division, theological education and training for much of the first century of their existence was carried on in herculean fashion: a solo divinity professor, also serving full-time as a local minister, led the Secession divinity halls. Substantial primary source material enables Whytock to present detailed biographical analysis of the Secession divinity professors, in addition to their methods and curriculum. The Secession divinity professors include both better-known names such as Ebenezer Erskine, John Brown of Haddington, and John Dick, as well as more obscure figures. Whytock completes the picture of the divinity halls and professors by including fascinating accounts of many of the theologians from the vantage of their students. By the early nineteenth century, Secession divinity halls developed into multiple professor institutions. Readers are left with the compelling conclusion that Secession divinity students, throughout the history of the Secession churches, received an education and practical training easily comparable to that given in the ancient Scottish universities under the mandate of the Church of Scotland.

The third and final section of the book is a case study of Secession theological education in British North America between 1820–1843 under the leadership of Thomas McCulloch in the Secession church divinity hall first at Pictou, Nova Scotia, and then at Halifax, Nova Scotia. Whytock skillfully traces Scottish continuities into this colonial setting and provides a comparative evaluation of the role and processes of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia (United Secession) in the education and training process. While McCulloch was appointed professor of divinity by the synod in 1820, he had previously established the Pictou Academy autonomously as a college level institution. Under synodical charge the available education was extended to the level of the divinity hall. The Presbytery exercise was also revived in this colonial context, as were the pedagogical methods and content typical to the Scottish Secession divinity halls.

Whytock's conclusion notes a surprising degree of uniformity "of both purpose and methodology" from "the continent and continuing on through both Kirk and Secession" (p. 380). He sees one of the key distinctions between the later Church of Scotland and the Secession divinity programs in the latter's strong "focus . . . upon the marriage of theology and piety" (p. 381). Numerous other assessments and useful applications in the conclusion of this groundbreaking study are followed by helpful charts, appendices, and an extensive bibliography. *An Educated Clergy's* grand and detailed survey of the history of post-Reformation Scottish theological education and training stands highly recommended for all desiring the insight of past generations in the crucial task of preparing men for gospel ministry.

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*Darwin's Sacred Cause*. By Adrian Desmond and James Moore. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009, xxi + 485 pp., \$30.00.

It is quite fashionable among antievolutionists to blame Darwin and his theory of evolution for the ills of modern society. From communist totalitarianism to misogyny to the Holocaust, there seems to be no twentieth century problem that has not been linked directly to the influence of Darwin. I have never found any of these "connections" very compelling for the simple reason that most of the supposed consequences pre-date Darwin's *Origin of Species*. I do not doubt that Darwin's ideas transformed racism, cut-throat capitalism, and totalitarianism by galvanizing them with novel propaganda points, but *influencing* is a far cry from *causing*.

My skepticism of this type of pop sociology fueled my great interest in Adrian Desmond and James Moore's new study, *Darwin's Sacred Cause*. Their previous work, *Darwin: The Life of a Tormented Evolutionist* (1991), related Darwin's development of evolution to theological concerns and especially to Darwin's own loss of faith. In this new book, the authors propose that the core purpose of Darwin's evolutionary work was an abiding hatred of slavery. "Rather than seeing 'the facts' force evolution on Darwin . . . we find a *moral* passion firing his evolutionary work" (p. xviii). This would surely be a different Darwin than the racist caricature emphasized by my creationist colleagues.

The book begins with Darwin at medical school in Edinburgh, being taught the proper method of stuffing birds by a freed slave named John. The narrative weaves back and forth between Darwin's experiences, the anti-slavery activities and sentiments of the extended Darwin-Wedgwood family (Charles's maternal grandfather was the first Josiah Wedgwood), and the interaction of natural history with the issues of slavery and race relations. It is on the last point at which the book excels. From phrenology to Agassiz to *Descent of Man*, the account of natural historians' politically-motivated attempts to explain racial differences and origins is a significant strength of the book. Through their study of this racial natural history literature, Desmond and Moore enrich our understanding of the context of both *Origin* and *Descent*.

For example, much has been made over Darwin's interest in breeding literature and its relationship to his development of artificial selection. Discussing the origin of domestic breeds, Darwin wrote, "The key is man's power of accumulative selection: nature gives successive variations; man adds them up in certain directions useful to him" (*Origin*, p. 30). Desmond and Moore emphasize that Darwin's ideas are not isolated or novel. Instead, interest in the origin of domesticated animals was first explored and exploited by advocates of a pluralist origin of the human races. In the 1840s, Samuel George Morton (among many others) sought to justify slavery by arguing that human races were actually different species with separate origins, based on analogies to animal breeding and hybridity. Lutheran minister John Bachman responded in his 1850 book *Doctrine of the Unity of the Human Race*, in which he used domestic breeds to argue against Morton. Desmond and Moore suggest that this debate helped fuel Darwin's interest in the evolutionary origin of humans as a means of unifying the human race by descent from a common ancestor.

Their account of the development of *Descent of Man* is the greatest strength of the book. After the publication of *Origin* and shortly after Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, dissenters from the Ethnological Society formed the Anthropological Society of London. Gone from this new society was talk of the common descent of human races, and American racist Josiah Nott appeared on their roll of Honorary Fellowships. Paid Confederate agents joined the society (and sat on the Council), attempting to sway English public opinion to support the South and the institution of slavery. Darwin's "bulldog" T. H. Huxley tussled over human origins with these "Anthropologicals" who disapproved of the implications of evolution for human racial unity.

In May 1864, Alfred Russel Wallace sent Darwin a copy of his paper “The origin of human races and the antiquity of man deduced from the theory of ‘natural selection,’” initially read at a meeting of the Anthropological Society. In his response, Darwin disagreed: “I suspect that a sort of sexual selection has been the most powerful means of changing the races of man” (*Darwin’s Sacred Cause*, p. 344). In *Origin*, Darwin had described sexual selection as “a struggle between the males for possession of the females; the result is not death to the unsuccessful competitor, but few or no offspring” (p. 88). In the case of humans, Darwin believed that racial differences developed from different standards of beauty, in the same way that the ostentatious tails of peacocks arose from the preferences of peahens. Shortly after his letter to Wallace, Darwin began gathering material for a “Man Chapt.” for his manuscript *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*. In early 1867, a year before *Variation* was published, Darwin removed the material on humans and began preparing it for a book of its own. He told Wallace that his purpose was to show that “sexual selection played an important part in the promotion of races” (*Darwin’s Sacred Cause*, p. 360). Thus, *Descent of Man* was created not to explain the descent of man from apes but the descent of human races from a common human ancestor.

*Descent* is a weird work that has long puzzled researchers. Nearly absent are important discoveries—among them Neandertals—that would have bolstered Darwin’s case for the animal ancestry of man. Instead, the book is taken up mostly by studies of sexual selection in nature. In describing possible explanations of the origins of the human races, Darwin wrote, “We have thus far been baffled in all our attempts to account for the differences between the races of man; but there remains one important agency, namely Sexual Selection, which appears to have acted powerfully on man, as on many other animals” (*Descent*, vol. 1, p. 249). Here is the secret to the peculiarity of *Descent*: Desmond and Moore’s analysis suggests that it was written to counter polygenist claims that races originated from separate ancestors by explaining *how* different races could evolve.

In its larger argument, *Darwin’s Sacred Cause* fails to persuade that the hatred of slavery animated and motivated all of Darwin’s evolutionary work. The content of the book focuses heavily on those around Darwin—his family, colleagues, and competitors—but Darwin seems to be a background player until the final chapters, which focus on *Descent*. Though Desmond and Moore do not shy away from making bold declarations about Darwin’s motives, the evidence marshaled for these interpretations often seems quite thin. For example, scholars and Darwin himself (in his diary) attribute his conversion to evolution to his contemplation of South American fossils and living species of the Galápagos Islands. In contrast, the authors link his musings on “common descent” to his encounter with the natives of Tierra del Fuego and other exotic locales while voyaging aboard the *Beagle*, but the evidence they cite seems equivocal. It is true that Darwin wrote about “savages”—“could our progenitors be such as these?”—which Desmond and Moore take as evidence of his pondering common descent between “civilized” English and South American natives. When read in context, however, the comment could very well be a contemplation of the progress of English civilization: “Of individual objects, perhaps no one is more sure to create astonishment, than the first sight, in his native haunt, of a real barbarian,—of man in his lowest and most savage state. One’s mind hurries back over past centuries, & then asks could our progenitors be such as these?” (*Beagle Diary*, p. 774).

And so it is throughout the book. The comments from Darwin’s diaries, notes, and letters gathered by Desmond and Moore definitely show a concern and even outrage over slavery, but they do not unambiguously implicate this concern as a major motivator for Darwin’s evolutionary thinking, certainly not to the exclusion of more mundane scientific concerns. The authors attribute Darwin’s interest in seed dispersal to Agassiz’s bizarre assertion that all species were created in their present ranges and population numbers (thus supporting the separate creation of human races). They omit

the equally (or perhaps more) likely influence of Edward Forbes, who attributed species on islands to dispersal across sunken land bridges and continents, an idea Darwin notoriously found absurd.

To their credit, Desmond and Moore do not ignore Darwin's darker writings about race, but their discussions of these passages are underwhelming at best. After Darwin read Malthus, he wrote: "When two races of men meet, they act precisely like two species of animals.—they fight, eat each other, bring diseases to each other &c., but then comes the most deadly struggle, namely which have the best fitted organization, or instincts (i.e. intellect in man) to gain the day.—In man chiefly intellect, in animals chiefly organization, though Cont. of Africa & West Indies shows organization in Black Race there gives the preponderance, intellect in Australia to the white." (Notebook E, 63–64). How do Desmond and Moore respond to this more militant view of race relations? Darwin "didn't see the incongruity as his science took on a Malthusian life of its own, shaped by the race-judging attitudes of his culture. . . . His science was becoming emotionally confused and ideologically messy" (pp. 147–48). Perhaps that is because it was not ideologically motivated in the first place.

It certainly cannot be said that Darwin outgrew this view of racial struggle for supremacy. From *Descent of Man*, he offered: "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilised races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes . . . will no doubt be exterminated. The break will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilised state, as we may hope, than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as at present between the negro or Australian and the gorilla" (vol. 1, p. 201). Desmond and Moore hardly mention this idea, but they do acknowledge that the "incongruity" between Darwin's anti-cruelty ethic and his brutal vision of the evolutionary outcome of race relations is "impossible to comprehend by twenty-first century standards" (p. 370). Indeed it is.

*Darwin's Sacred Cause* is an important contribution to our understanding of the context into which Darwin's evolutionary theories appeared and the propaganda uses to which theories of racial and species origins were put in the nineteenth century. Desmond and Moore have certainly made an excellent case for the main purpose of *Descent of Man*, but their central thesis—that Darwin's antislavery ethic motivated his evolutionary work—is unconvincing.

If the authors are wrong about this motivation, was Darwin a racist after all? I think such a charge is hard to justify without stooping to anachronistic and triumphalist standards of judgment. Whatever else he was, Darwin *was* a product of his time. By our twenty-first century standards, almost all people of European descent in the nineteenth century were racist. Saying that Darwin was a racist is little more informative than saying he lived in the nineteenth century. Far more important, I think, is Darwin's attitude about the treatment of other races. Here, Desmond and Moore do us a great service by illuminating the real passion of Darwin's anti-slavery and anti-cruelty. By making Darwin's evolution primarily ideological, however, they miss an important point: that science can be used to serve different ideologies. Common ancestry and natural selection can be interpreted to serve slavery and cruelty just as easily as to oppose them. Darwin's equivocation on this point in *Descent*, where he declares slavery a "great sin" (vol. 1, p. 94) but still holds a bleak view of the future of non-white races, illustrates this point. Most scientific ideas do not have one inexorable ethical consequence. Neither view of Darwin—as racist or as anti-slavery ideologue—does justice to the complexities of the development and application of his theories of evolution.

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*The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia.* By Charles F. Irons. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008, xi + 366 pp., \$24.95 paper.

Charles F. Irons's recent book, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity*, is a careful and honest exploration of the complex relationship between evangelical whites and blacks in Virginia through the colonial and antebellum eras. The study boldly asks why so many southern white evangelicals, devoutly committed to Christianity, failed to respect the moral implications of their faith. In response to this challenging inquiry, Irons argues that these evangelicals engaged in the peculiar institution and developed a complex view of proslavery Christianity as the result of their relationship with enslaved persons in the context of shared religious communities. In other words, many white evangelicals interpreted their close interaction with black evangelicals in the churches and on the homesteads and plantations as confirmation that slavery was benevolent and God-ordained. Irons's command of the evidence is impressive and he compellingly argues his case with precision and lucidity.

The distinction of Irons's viewpoint, and perhaps his book's most significant contribution to the study of American history, is the importance he places on evangelical religion as an influential factor. Alongside race, gender, and class, Irons identifies the "religious commitment" inherent in evangelicalism as an analytical category worthy of comparable consideration (p. 10). In this study, the evangelical commitment of the defenders of slavery plays a role every bit as forceful as racial ties in the formation of proslavery Christianity in antebellum Virginia. While some historians will undoubtedly contest the prominence given to something as elusive as religious commitment as an analytical class unto itself, Irons's skillful demonstration of the unique insights that can be gleaned from this sort of historical consideration is a persuasive defense. By perceiving how significant numbers of white evangelicals in antebellum Virginia understood their religious allegiance, Irons exposes many of the intricacies of the Christian proslavery argument they produced and perpetuated.

As a historical study, the concern over the relationship between Christianity and morality makes it an especially significant one. Irons calls the general approval of the institution of slavery among southern white evangelicals in the colonial and antebellum periods a "staggering moral failure" (p. ix). While Irons's own religious commitment is not made explicit, he does make it clear that his sympathies are undeniably guided by Christian morality. Particularly, he finds the parable of the Good Samaritan and the gospel imperative to love one's neighbor indisputable rebuttals to the wrongheaded interpretation of evangelicalism advocated by many antebellum white southerners. Espousing this sort of association with the Christian faith, Irons deals with evangelical religious commitment charitably as he levels the moral charge against particular evangelicals whom he considers at fault and not against Christianity itself. In the study's examination of Thornton Stringfellow, one of Virginia's leading Baptist proslavery proponents in the mid-nineteenth century, Irons accuses his suppositions about slaves and their evangelization of being guilty of "theological falsehoods" (p. 215). Irons makes his ethical judgments from an interpretation of Christianity that does not suffer from the moral bankruptcy he sees in much of southern antebellum evangelicalism. By explicating the importance of religious commitment to the interactive relationships between white and black evangelicals in Virginia, he demonstrates the Christian faith's ability to be transformative as well as misrepresented.

Irons's study of proslavery Christianity is a historical narrative with a purpose. In much the same way that George Marsden has long advocated a "prophetic dimension" to the Christian historian's task, prudently exposing the moral shortcomings and perversities of past eras, Irons seeks to critically engage the beliefs and motives behind the evangelicals who supported the South's "evil institution" (p. 1). For Irons, it is not only

America's history of slavery that demands a value judgment, but also the troublesome distortion of the Christian gospel that accompanied it.

The thrust of Irons's argument rests in the exposure he gives to the neglected category of religious commitment. He strings together important evidence long overlooked, arguing that the ways in which blacks responded to white evangelicals' advances to Christianize them resulted in white confidence that slavery was justified. In the first place, he uncovers the prominent places occupied by black converts to evangelicalism in Virginia's religious communities. Diverging from the perspective of many historians who attend too exclusively to the "moral failure of white evangelicals to act against slavery," Irons emphasizes "the story of black evangelicals seeking and winning smaller victories within the church" (p. 57). One minor victory is evident in the number of black preachers, slave and free, who spoke throughout Virginia, occasionally even proclaiming their message to biracial congregations. Perhaps more striking is what Irons considers the "greatest indication of black spiritual initiative," the establishment of autonomous black churches in early antebellum Virginia (p. 48). Those who were not able or chose not to attend all-black congregations in many cases became active participants in white churches. The study reveals numerous accounts of slaves appealing for membership to white-dominated churches. Corresponding to these expressions of spiritual initiative, freedom of mobility was often extended to slaves by their masters, allowing them to travel for Sunday worship. While Nat Turner's slave insurrection of 1831 triggered an ideological reformation among white evangelical defenders of slavery and proved a considerable setback to the freedom of black religious expression, the upshot was increased concern among whites for the spiritual wellbeing of their enslaved persons, albeit as a means of more vigilant racial control. As white evangelicals worked harder for black conversions, some freedoms were gradually restored as post-Turner laws were less stringently observed, including permitting some blacks to preach, promotion of literacy (for reading the Bible), and the "single greatest concession," the formation of quasi-independent churches only loosely managed by white ministers (p. 187). Irons uses these evidences to demonstrate the controlling belief among many southern white Christians that "evangelical conversion changed the heart and made better slaves" (p. 18). The principally enthusiastic manner in which black converts responded to evangelistic efforts and involved themselves in religious communities only solidified this white conviction.

Irons criticizes much of the historical work on antebellum Virginia for failing to take into account how greatly white southerners' evangelical faith shaped their proslavery views. The study identifies paternalism and colonization as clear instances of strong religious influence. As the number of black converts to Christianity continued to rise in the late eighteenth century, white evangelicals "could no longer explain slavery through appeals to distinctions between heathen and Christian and relied more heavily on paternalism to explain slavery's righteousness" (p. 89). In turn, the nature of the ideology behind paternalistic sentiments became increasingly evangelical. Ministers exhorted the slaveholders in their congregations to satisfy the spiritual as well as the natural needs of the persons under their care. It was assumed that since black individuals were unfit for freedom and unable to adopt Christianity on their own, it was the responsibility of the master both to keep blacks enslaved and to see to their religious education. Likewise, support for colonization became a means for southern white evangelicals to fulfill their spiritual duty (and ease their consciences). Injecting colonization with evangelical fervor, many white Virginian Christians (as well as some blacks) perceived it to be a divine plan to civilize and Christianize the African people. Thus, the peculiar institution, vital for the economy of southern slaveholders, also found its place in God's redemptive plan for the world. As one future governor, Henry A. Wise, triumphantly pronounced, "Africa gave to Virginia *a savage and a slave*, Virginia gives back to Africa *a citizen and a Christian!*" (p. 195). Irons convincingly interprets the evidence

to indicate that white southerners' evangelical commitment compelled them to Christianize not only their slaves but also their views on paternalism and colonization, thus transforming their means of racial control into methods for accomplishing the divine will.

White evangelical Virginians' religious commitment has also been an insufficiently acknowledged factor in the state's reluctance to secede. Likewise, when it finally did secede, the state defended its move on the grounds that it was preserving its moral and holy duty to its African Americans. Irons notes that because of the longstanding conviction that slavery "was a civil rather than a moral issue," Virginia expected discussion in the public sphere and was not disturbed, as was the Deep South, by talk of slavery in civil governments (p. 225). Thus, prior to President Lincoln's call for the organization of a Federal army to quell the southern rebellion, Virginia held on to the hope that secession was unnecessary. However, when the state was eventually compelled to secede from the Union, it became one of the Confederacy's staunchest defenders. Irons contends that white Virginians were bolstered by their evangelical proslavery argument and thus confident in the "righteousness of their cause" (p. 238). Seeing the continuation of slavery as "the more fundamental cause of the war" for Virginians, Irons writes: "White evangelicals hung their core rationalization for going to war upon the need to maintain this bond [between blacks and whites] and to protect the 'integrity of the social tie between master and slave'" (pp. 244–45). For Irons, white Virginians' commitment to evangelical faith both necessitated their reluctance to secede and, when Lincoln's army made secession inevitable, obliged Virginia to become one of the Confederacy's most loyal adherents.

Irons's study reveals many of the shortcomings of historical analysis on the influence of evangelical allegiance. However, it also creates the potential for a few of its own. In chapter 2, Irons argues that white Virginians failed to see the "synergy between black religious commitment and rebellion" (p. 94). He compensates for this ignorance by contending at length in favor of such a connection. However, he exposes himself to criticism for possibly undermining the very real relationship that did exist between freedom and rebellion by emphasizing that of religion and rebellion. For example, in recounting the lives of two notable evangelical revolutionaries, Gabriel Prosser and David Walker, Irons fails to make anything except mention of the fact that Prosser was a blacksmith who hired himself out (and thus enjoyed comparative freedom) and Walker was a free black tailor (pp. 94, 132). Less significantly, the attention Irons gives to the impact of white Virginians' evangelical faith on in-state conceptions of secession and war obscures the contribution concerns over constitutional rights and state sovereignty made to the same issues. In both instances, Irons's emphasis on correcting historical negligence runs the risk of undermining other important factors. For such a careful and exemplary study, however, these are very much peripheral issues, the minor dangers confronted by any worthwhile investigation that examines new evidence or explores nuanced interpretations.

*The Origins of Proslavery Christianity* is a compelling study of the formation of the evangelical defense of slavery in colonial and antebellum Virginia. Irons's consideration of religious commitment as a viable analytical category, his comprehensive grasp of the sources and evidence, and his insightful thesis that the relationships between evangelically committed whites and blacks created the proslavery argument make this an authoritative exploration. Through careful exposure of neglected data, articulate argumentation, and fresh interpretations, Irons presents an excellent treatment of a significant subject that is full of historical interest and moral import.

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*The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift: The Fissuring of American Evangelical Theology from 1936 to 1944.* By R. Todd Mangum. Studies in Evangelical Thought. Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 2007, xv + 319 pp., \$33.99 paper.

R. Todd Mangum's *The Dispensation-Covenantal Rift: The Fissuring of American Evangelical Theology from 1936 to 1944* presents a compelling study of a turbulent, formative period in American evangelical history. Writing in a field that has benefited from previous works like D. G. Hart's *Defending the Faith* and Joel Carpenter's *Revive Us Again*, Mangum covers insightfully a cultural epoch in which Christians found themselves embattled but alive and striving (sometimes against one another) to find the right balance of cooperation and definition.

One slice of this turbulent period centers in the debates between Presbyterians about the nature of dispensationalism, the theological system whose popularity escalated in the early twentieth century with the rise of Lewis Sperry Chafer. It is possible that many evangelicals have missed or avoided this period of church history and this debate; indeed, it is tempting to write it off as intramural and unhelpful from a broader historical perspective. Mangum's careful work reveals, however, that the debates between Presbyterian advocates of dispensationalism and those who embraced covenant theology contain helpful lessons for contemporary Christians and play a significant role in the narrative of twentieth-century American Christianity. *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* illuminates the turbulence of this period, the coalescence of these camps into the forms they occupy today, and the lessons that emerge from the rift.

In chapter one, "Mapping Fault Lines in Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism," Mangum notes from that though others have paid attention to some aspects of the rift's formative influences, "this is the first study to take up a sociological and historical-theological analysis of the debate between dispensationalism and covenant theology as it unfolded from the late-1930s to the early-1940s" (p. 5). These differences between the two theological systems were clarified in a report that many readers will not immediately recognize, the "1941-1944 investigation of dispensationalism by the Ad Interim Committee on Changes in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church, U.S." This little-known investigation is in fact very important in tracing the development of modern evangelical theology, "given that its findings came to be treated by both sides of the debate as an official ruling of Reformed-Covenant theology against dispensationalism" (p. 6). The AIC report signaled "the culmination of hostilities that had been building for decades" and "remains to this day as close to an official denunciation of dispensationalism by a Reformed-Covenantalist body as has ever been produced" (pp. 12-13). The vast span of the book analyzes the tectonic factors that produced this "denunciation" and the theological divergence that followed and that persists to the current day.

In offering this analysis, Mangum has a historical axe to grind. He wishes to correct a prevailing school of thought that has characterized the Presbyterian rift as follows: "My thesis suggests (*inter alia*) that some adjustment is needed in what has become a standard characterization of 'dispensationalist' and 'Princetonian' parties in the early 'fundamentalist alliance,' viz., that 'dispensationalists' and 'Princetonians,' though affirming incompatible theological systems, temporarily allied themselves in order to combat their common enemy, modernism" p. 19. Over against the sharp dispensationalist-Princetonian scheme of categorization, Mangum proposes that "[r]ather than representing some sort of return to the way things were before, their rift represented more a 'falling out' between former friends" which proceeded from "new lines of demarcation between conservative, Bible-believing Christians" (p. 23). The various battles of previous decades had united conservative Christians, including two streams that Mangum identifies as "Niagara fundamentalism" and "Presbyterian

fundamentalism.” (p. 30). To pare their identities down, the first consisted of more independent-minded fundamentalists, the second of Presbyterian confessional adherents. When the dust from the culture wars of the early twentieth century settled in the 1930s, these two groups discovered that they were rather awkwardly arm-in-arm. It took time for the ramifications of this discovery to play out and to result in antagonistic separation. Mangum devotes the breadth of *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* to unwinding these threads and demonstrating that they were in some cases unnecessarily and unhelpfully separated.

Chapter two, “The Fracturing of the Fundamentalist Coalition,” devotes considerable attention to the crisis in evangelical circles that arose over the nature of cooperation. Fundamentalists in this era, Mangum argues, believed that they had a “divine calling.” Whereas in prior battles this calling was clear, “[i]n the 1930s–1940s, conflicts erupt between them as they seek to discern exactly what that calling is” (p. 26).

In wrangling with this question, several members of the fledgling Orthodox Presbyterian Church who were professors of Westminster Theological Seminary found themselves uneasy about an alliance with dispensationalists. These men—“Presbyterian fundamentalists,” by Mangum’s characterization, a group that included such notables as J. Gresham Machen and John Murray—chafed at the perceived doctrinal innovations of the “Niagara fundamentalists,” a group that included men like Carl McIntire and Chafer. At this historical fault-line, the members of the OPC wanted to shore up their denomination’s stance on the *Westminster Confession* following a period of great turmoil and change related to Princeton Seminary, Presbyterian missions, and the PCUSA. Conversely, the Niagara strand wanted to harness the momentum created naturally by the culture wars to form a broad-based evangelical coalition. A second fault line thus emerged, this one between evangelicals, though this line did not crack along strictly “Old School” and “New School” Presbyterian patterns, according to Mangum.

Mangum examines the theological fissures between dispensationalism and covenantal theology in chapter three, “A Seismogram of Late-1930s American Evangelicalism.” He shows that the controversy over dispensational theology mingled with ongoing debate about the validity of premillennial eschatology. This mingling was generally unhelpful, as those opposing dispensationalism sometimes attacked premillennialism, even though some members of the premillennialist camp adhered to this millennial view. The chapter displays clearly the ways in which theological discussion, if not carefully nuanced and fairly adjudicated by both sides, can easily lead to an exercise in “missing the point.”

Chapter four, “The Tremors Travel Southward (Part 1): The Context of the Controversy Over Dispensationalism in the PCUS,” covers the way in which dispensational premillennialism was marginalized in the Southern wing of the PCUS. The wind of the day blew against dispensationalists, for the modernist controversies had heightened concern about doctrinal fidelity as conceptualized in the *Westminster Confession*. The fact that some dispensationalist Presbyterians advocated for changes to the *Confession* in order to harmonize it with their system of theology all but sealed their fate, as Mangum constructs the situation. In another era, perhaps, the system would have been more carefully considered and deemed within the bounds of orthodoxy, but in this period, the wind was too strong.

The purpose of chapter five, “The Tremors Travel Southward (Part 2): The Context of the Controversy Over Dispensationalism in the PCUS,” is the analysis of the proceedings of the AIC, the committee that was responsible for reporting to the General Assembly on the theological validity of dispensational thought. In sum, the committee, driven by influential figures like James Edwin Bear of Richmond’s Union Seminary, concluded that dispensationalism did not fit within the bounds of the *Confession*, though

it resisted ordering action in the national sessions, leaving these bodies to decide for themselves the practical implications of its decisions. Mangum concludes that this process was carried out with considerable confusion, mischaracterization, and unkindness: "We today are just beginning to sort truth from error in this legacy [of the covenantal-dispensational battle] ingloriously bequeathed to American evangelicalism" (p. 173).

Mangum synthesizes his themes and ideas in the sixth chapter, "A Concluding Analysis of the Controversies Over Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology in the 1930s–1940s." Here, the historian brings both dispensationalists and covenantal theologians to the woodshed. On the one hand, he chastises dispensationalists for either ignoring or missing the careful qualifications made by covenant theologians, and highlights how Chafer, among others, sometimes muddled the debate by mixing his terms and engaging in slippery debate. In addition, "simply parroting the older dispensationalist canard that the dispensationalist-covenant theology debate is between those who take the Bible 'literally' and those who 'allegorize' or 'spiritualize' Scripture should come to an abrupt halt" (p. 211). On the other hand, Mangum rebukes covenantal theologians for attacking dispensationalism *writ large* according to the contours of Chafer's thought, which careful study shows contained eccentricities that many dispensationalists did not hold. Mangum closes *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* with an exhortation to contemporary Christians to steer clear of "needless clamoring over misunderstandings and misrepresentations provoked by the falling out between dispensationalism and covenant theology." Instead, one holds out "hope that clearer heads will now prevail" and that rapprochement, to the extent that it is possible, will occur (p. 211).

This book has several strengths that commend it to students of history and theology in general and American evangelicalism in particular. First, *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* is quite helpful for understanding the current evangelical scene. For those who are aware of the past connections between dispensationalists (and institutions like Dallas Theological Seminary) and Presbyterians, the text provides beneficial coverage and analysis of the rift and will thus further inform and instruct students of this period. For those who are not aware of these connections but have a strong interest in either American church history or the theological development of dispensationalism, Mangum's monograph will prove incisive and beneficial. The close ties between the two camps, frequently polarized throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, are made clear throughout, as is the tightening and honing of the dispensationalist school. The controversy was not always kind to this group, but it did prove helpful in ironing out certain inconsistencies and weaknesses of this system. On a doctrinal level, then, the debate strengthened the dispensationalists. Mangum's skillful blending of social history and doctrinal study brings this reality to light.

A second strength of *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* is its underlying message that nuanced debate, so far from being theological hair-splitting, actually carries tremendous import for the shaping of the evangelical community. Despite what some may say, theological debate is no passing matter, no waste of breath and ink; indeed, it carries the potential to form and re-form the evangelical landscape. When the AIC handed down its verdict against dispensationalism, it altered for decades the evangelical landscape. Because of one committee's ruling, dispensationalists drifted away from Presbyterianism, and a sizeable mass of the dispensationalist movement shifted away from a strong identification with Reformed theology. There are indications of a counter-shift in recent decades, to be sure, but it took many years for this counter-shift to take place. Mangum's work makes a helpful contribution, then, in showing that nuance and complexity must be painstakingly explored in matters of doctrine and theology. Whether in denominational proceedings, scholarly texts, local church assemblies, or Internet debates, doctrine and theology must be carefully pared and judiciously examined. Many

Christian people will not necessarily follow all of these developments, but they will be affected by them. The debate that arose among Presbyterians began in the academy but terminated in the church.

The third important aspect of *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* is its well-supported call for Christian debate that brims with charity and clarity. Consider Mangum's assessment of the "attacks" made upon dispensationalism by the PCUS and the OPC: "The sweeping attack on 'dispensationalism' enabled both the PCUS and the OPC to eject anti-Confessional views from their respective denominations; however, because so little allowance was made for mediating positions, this removal was accomplished in a manner less like a surgical excision than as a bludgeoning gouge. True, 'anti-Confessional,' 'heretical,' 'dispensationalist' views were successfully removed, but completely innocuous, Reformed, Confessionally-consistent views and persons were also ripped out right along with them. In historical hindsight, we see that this did not have to be" (p. 201). The text amply supports this bold assessment of the rift. One cringes to read the above paragraph, just as one cringes to read of dispensationalists classifying covenant theology as akin to modernist heresy (p. 69). From the beginning, the controversy lacked charity; this absence led to regular failures by both sides to delineate carefully the terms of debate and then stick to them in their analyses of the other side. Had the covenantalists approached the dispensationalists with greater charity, they might well have avoided such a dramatic rift, and such a long-lasting separation. The same is true of the other side. Generally speaking, a lack of clarity among dispensationalists (especially Chafer, who sometimes played fast-and-loose with his terms) led at times to understandable confusion on the part of covenantalists. Though some attempted to clear up matters of disagreement, other dispensationalists avoided such a tact and unnecessarily distanced themselves from those who earnestly sought to understand their teachings. *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* simultaneously shows the importance of debate even as it reveals that it must be carried out with studious clarity and cruciform charity. This insightful historical text also functions as a helpful case study in the theological conflict.

The idea that Mangum spends a good amount of effort to develop was noted above, namely, that the rift was caused not primarily by an exacerbation of "Old School" and "New School" tensions but by the incompatibility of the traditional and nontraditional parties within the Presbyterian camp in the 1930s. More background is necessary to adjudicate this claim, but Mangum makes a helpful historical contribution in arguing this thesis. His argument accords with the fact that both the traditionalists and non-traditionalists adhered to certain theological and practical ideas that would fall in the New School camp. Furthermore, prior to several landmark events of the early decades of the century, conservative Presbyterians were united together. With this said, however, Marsden's conceptualization of this era is not without merit, for it seems undeniable that the fallout between the two camps did, in the end, proceed along lines quite similar to the Old School-New School tensions. Mangum does not overhaul Marsden, but he does helpfully tweak his model.

There are other strengths to commend the book. Mangum supports his case with extensive footnotes that cover a variety of topics and personalities. He regularly illumines the specific arguments made by covenantalists and dispensationalists in his footnotes. The sociological perspective that Mangum sometimes employs brings to light the complex factors of the rift while steering clear of an overly sociological reading of theology. Finally, the text is well written and generally easy to follow. It does bog down at times in sections of great theological and historical complexity, and not all readers will be familiar with the debates among historians into which Mangum enters, but the text is generally clear and cogent.

The work suffers from a few flaws, though none of them are major. Because he is concerned with the 1936–1944 debates, Mangum jumps into this period without giving a great deal of background. This weakness is made more glaring by the fact that one of Mangum’s chief aims in writing this text is to dispel previous conceptions of the fault-lines that created the rift, namely, those that center in the “Old School” versus “New School” debate. While some readers will be familiar with these groups, many will not; it would have been helpful for Mangum to provide a chapter on this matter. As it is, many readers will be able to evaluate Mangum’s argument only at face level. In addition, though Mangum’s thesis involves his view that the split happened along the fault lines of the “Niagara” and “Presbyterian” fundamentalist factions, the majority of the work considers other matters. His thesis seems settled in the early part of the book, leaving the reader wondering at times what the connections between the chapters actually are.

Aside from these matters, R. Todd Mangum’s *The Dispensational-Covenantal Rift* is a useful and important text. Students of modern theology, history, and Christian history should study it carefully and learn from its insightful characterization of a turbulent time. So far from being an isolated decade of only the narrowest significance for the contemporary church, the turbulent years between 1936 and 1944 directly relate to the current evangelical landscape. In its detailed and insightful coverage of the rift in this period, the text shows contemporary Christians the great importance of careful theologizing even as it reveals that such theologizing must be done with great clarity and charity. Because evangelicalism will face controversy and disagreement until the day its Lord returns, this is an important point, one made by a thoughtful author in an important book.

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#### ERRATUM

In his plenary address, “Challenges in New Testament Textual Criticism for the Twenty-First Century,” printed in the March 2009 issue of the Journal, Daniel B. Wallace wrote as follows:

Historically, the Institut in Münster has operated under the auspices of the Protestant faculty at the University of Münster. When Barbara Aland retired a few years ago, the search was on for a new director. In 2004, Holger Strutwolf was found. What is remarkable about this appointment is that Strutwolf is a Roman Catholic. To understand how radical this shift is, just imagine the Evangelical Theological Society having a Roman Catholic as its president!

With deepest apologies, Daniel Wallace wishes to acknowledge that his statement was made in error and that Holger Strutwolf is not in fact a Roman Catholic.